

THE Spiritual Magazine.

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THE BATTLES OF SPIRITUALISM.

By WILLIAM HOWITT.

THE Fort of Spiritualism need be strong. It is eagerly assailed by natural and unnatural, by external and internal foes. In all countries where it exists, it exists under the same conditions; its external foes exhibit the same tactics under all skies; its internal foes, namely, its professed friends, promulgate the same damaging and degrading theories and dogmas. In England, Dr. Sexton maintains a vigorous fight for Christian truth; abroad, the same conflict rages. In England, the dreary Materialist continues to pursue his old, hackneyed line of attack, without originating one new idea, and regardless of the palpable fact that he has yet conquered no single outpost of the hated enemy; has not by a single man diminished its strength; has achieved no single victory, even over his own blind obstinacy and dull prejudices.

The inevitable Carpenter planes away at it in his lecture rooms and in periodicals. The equally persistent and equally resultless G. H. Lewes still repeats the same worn-out commonplaces in the *Contemporary*, which would have swamped his interesting *History of Philosophy*, and *Life of Goëthe*. The Huxleys and Tyndalls still fight with their backs to the light and the enemy; shut their eyes to see the better, and sling their boomerangs at random over their shoulders, and wonder that they hit nothing.

All these wise men refuse to inquire into what excites their alarm. Not inquiring, they cannot know what it is that they resist. Imagine a controversy betwixt men who are always inquiring, experimenting, and comparing results with others

who inquire, experiment, and compare, and other men who do nothing of all this. Who only keep to the silly jargon of hallucinations, deceptive senses, subjective impressions, brain-waves, and similar gallimaufry. One of these gentlemen the other day declared that Spiritualism had never originated a single new idea. Was he ignorant—probably; for it is his system not to inquire—that Spiritualism, in his own domain of physics, has revealed more new facts and laws than all the modern physicists together? Facts are common-places to Spiritualists, any one of which would make the reputation of a physiologist who would take it up and palm it off as his discovery, as Huxley by Protoplasm. Spiritualism a thousand times, and before thousands of spectators, has shown that matter can be made to pass through matter of the most solid kind without visible violence or visible trace. Matter can be made light or heavy, visible, or invisible, at the will of those spiritual powers whose very existence these physicists deny. Matter can be rendered swift or inert by the same means. Odours, colours, sounds can be produced without any visible cause.

In fact, the scientific Spiritualist sees the phenomena of matter under experiments most rigidly and repeatedly performed, developing themselves in wholly new, wholly unexpected and marvellous phases, ever more amazingly and progressively unfolding, which compel him to believe, matter at this point of advance into the real, is as wholly inconceivable in its nature as is spirit itself, and that the mere material physiologist is but a tyro, who possesses neither the instruments nor apparatus for the highest range of research, and with all his boasts of achieved discovery, has not yet even mastered the rudiments of objective science.

I may go further, and say that the most ordinary individual who has made himself tolerably familiar with the later revelations of Spiritualism knows more of the profounder properties of matter than all the professors of science of England or any other country, except Professor Crookes, or other such *savant*—if such there be, who has dared to despise the prejudices of his order, and has nobly placed himself by the side of those illustrious American professors of law and science, Judge Edmonds and Dr. Julius Hare.

Yet, not only in England, but in France, Germany, Italy, Russia, America, and Australia, the race of *soi-disant* philosophers continue to ignore the most marvellous phenomena, and only grow the more desperate as they see that the enemy, whom they pretend to despise, does not halt in its course, nor even waste a glance upon them. Yes, it must be a provoking

reflection, that all the assaults of all the enemies of Spiritualism for these five-and-twenty years have not beaten in a single brick of a single wall; silenced even the most rusty gun, or destroyed a single soldier in the ranks of a foe, which all the antagonists of all arms, colours, and calibres declared from the first was but a mere *fata-morgana*, a myth, a mist, a hoax, and a delusion. To be beaten by a foe, which in the outset and all along they declared to be beneath contempt, is to be beaten indeed! A foe that they have a hundred or more times sung *Io Pean* over as dead, dead for ever; annihilated, pounded to dust, and scattered to all the winds. To see this enemy still alive, and even more alive; widening its camp, extending its march, enrolling fresh levies in all lands, and of all tongues and faiths, must be a maddening spectacle. They, the chiefs of science, the lauded and the fashionable; they, the accredited authority of so many discoveries in physics; they who found protoplasm, the principal of life, in the good old Phœnician historian Sanchoniatho, and palmed it off as chemically deduced from the mud of rivers, where it never existed, but only in the myths of Phœnician mythology;* they who command the ear of crowds of the scientific and unscientific frequenters of learned societies, of fashionable lecture-room and annually peripatetic meetings; they, the proud and ambitious, to be so foiled by a foe whom they dubbed so despicable! *Proh pudor!*

Let us look a little at a fact or two of recent occurrence. The Huxleys and Tyndalls of the University of Petersburg, finding Spiritualism rather making head in Russia, were seized with the same mania which had long ago bewitched their class in Harvard College in America, the *savans* of Paris, and the Brewsters, the Broughams, and the journals in England. They determined, like all these their predecessors, to crush the reptile at once, unwarned by the lamentable failure in reptile-squashing of all these learned bodies and learned personages. They, therefore, got up a commission on the admirably one-sided principle common in such cases, on the same principle as the recent English Parliamentary Commission on vivisection, which voted rabid vivisectionists amongst its members. These self-elected physicists of the Petersburg University resolved to decide the fate of Spiritualism once more. In due time, having had experiments performed before them by the amazing number of THREE so-called mediums of their own choosing, they issued a grave report a few months ago, to the effect that "Spiritualism is composed of unconscious delusion and conscious fraud, and is utterly unworthy of notice by science or religion." This

* See *Sanchoniatho*; or, *Howitt's History of the Supernatural*, Vol. I., p. 234.

wondrous report on a collective body of facts and on a principle which have had a run of five-and-twenty years against all odds and obstacles, has had its hundreds of mediums, its tens of thousands of carefully-conducted experiments by and in the presence of men and women of first-rate intellects and acquirements, and its many millions of disciples, made such by experiment alone, was at least modest, or if not, tolerably foolish. But it was at once seized on by the press, that *soi-disant*, independent, and light-diffusing organ—that ever-servile organ of the prevailing idea—in all countries; that dread of tyrants—that most arbitrary of all tyrants! The Russian report was printed and puffed in the Italian newspapers of all politics, and struck the Italian Spiritualists not familiar with this phrase of the enemy with dire consternation. One of the most active and intelligent of them, Signor Tanfani, a gentleman who has seen much of Spiritualism both at home and in England, came to me in great alarm, asking whether I did not think this report the actual death-blow of Spiritualism? I replied, that I had seen so many death-blows dealt to this imperishable truth, that I was not at all hurt by it. The same death-blow had been struck by high and scientific Goliaths in every European country that he could name, as well as in America, and yet Spiritualism not only survived but had thriven lustily on it. So early as the time when Franklin was in Paris soliciting aid from France for the War of American Independence, the great lightning-tamer had sate on a commission of the French Academy on mesmerism, and had signed its report that mesmerism was a delusion and imposture. Mesmerism still lived on, survived the very monarchy of France, and twenty years after was pronounced by another Government Commission a great fact.

The Commissioners of Harvard College in America; the most determined efforts of Brewster and Brougham of that day, of the *Times* and the *Quarterlies*, the *Monthlies*, and the newspapers ever since, a pack in full and constant chase, and all the feverish attacks of all the scientists and sciolists; the Tyndals, Huxleys, Leweses, Carpenters, &c., had made as much cry and produced as little wool. This rather restored the spirits of my friend and of his Spiritualistic friends; but on the heels of my assurances came a seriously reasoned article in the *Osservatore Romano*, one of the leading Catholic papers of Rome, which I here transcribe at length as a fair specimen of a Vatican logician's view of the question. With its animus against all Spiritualism but that of its own church, it is still a stout champion for the principle itself, and affords a good occasion *ad hoste doceri*.

SPIRITUALISM ACCORDING TO THE "OSSERVATORE ROMANO."

"As it is certain that many facts attributed to Spiritualism are to be set down to illusions and imposture, so it is equally true that under the name of Spiritism, scientifically speaking, is alone designated that class of phenomena that are of a nature identical with, or bearing a perfect resemblance, in their accessories, to those which in past times were called magical.

"In this sense, the Roman congregations and the bishops understood Spiritism. In this sense also understood it the Christian and theologic philosophers, who against the sciolists of the age and their followers, often excusable for their gross ignorance, undertook to show the real nature of the Spiritistic phenomena, and the absolute impossibility of explaining them by natural causes. The Devil, as Tertullian happily said, is the *ape of God*, and wishes to have his altars, his rites, his miracles, his ministers, his set days, and his congregations. This is the true origin of this class of facts, which have had different names in the course of centuries, but always the same stamp, namely, that of the enemy of the human race.

"To deny absolutely this class of facts, is to cut away the basis of all historical criticism, and for a Catholic would be, moreover, stupid temerity and a culpable error. To attribute them to occult forces of nature is a manifest absurdity; for in this order of facts even those of the very slightest kind are evidently beyond the laws of nature, and not seldom directly contrary to them. Now, it is opposed to reason that laws not yet known should be of an order contrary to those already known; because it is opposed to reason that order should be the result of conflicting elements. Therefore, it is opposed to reason that the phenomena of Spiritism should proceed from these occult causes.

"Nevertheless, as we have stated in a recent article on this question, No. 93, April 21, namely, on the so-called haunted house in the Corso, the modern cavillers always take care to repeat that the phenomena of Spiritism either do not exist at all, or may be easily explained by natural causes. This they say out of hatred of all that has affinity to the supernatural, or to the universal traditions of the human race; and, moreover, to make these execrable practices innocent in the eyes of the simple; and, finally, to discredit and abuse the authority of bishops and Catholic doctors. And here it is to be noted that the number of those who belong to the first party, who deny absolutely the existence of Spiritualistic phenomena, or at least consider them unworthy of notice, is diminishing every day, as Littré himself observed in a long article written on this subject

in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, and referred to by Father Caroli in his work on the cause of mesmeric phenomena ; but in truth none are of so little importance as to be unworthy of notice.

“Just lately the journals of Petersburg referred to a long document, entitled ‘An Inquest into Spiritism,’ which may be read in No. 110 of the *Opinion*. In this report, edited by a commission of scientists selected from the Physiological Society of the University of Petersburg, it is expressly asserted that the phenomena called Spiritist, and attributed by the vulgar (*sic*) to preternatural causes, are gross impostures, and wholly unworthy of observation or study. According to these gentlemen, there is no difference between Spiritists and ordinary *prestidigitateurs*, and that religion and science have nothing to do with them.

“If the short space of an article would allow, we could easily confute, step by step, this strange document, and show that it is a mere jumble of vague generalities, of inaccuracies, and of contradictions ; but for our purpose, the logic of this report is sufficient. Why do the scientists of Petersburg conclude that Spiritism is only a vulgar delusion ? Simply because three Spiritists performed their experiments before the Commission, and turned out to be deluders, or bunglers ! Let us grant that this was demonstrated ; that the experiments made before the Commission were sufficient to decide that ; let us also take for granted that the Commission acted in good faith, which, however, is very doubtful, seeing the small number of persons subjected to examination, and the nature of the experiments made. All this granted, it still remains to be asked whether, from the existence of three juggling Spiritists, it can be rationally deduced that Spiritism is a delusion ? If this mode of reasoning is sufficient for the Scientific Commission of Petersburg, such as it is, it is by no means sufficient for men of sense. The truth is, that the Commission, quite aware of the insufficiency of its premises, has wished to strengthen them by adding that, before coming to a definitive verdict on the nature of Spiritism, it has taken into consideration also the experiments made *privately* by its members, and has examined the printed relations of the phenomena in question. But we ask them what and how many were these said experiments ? What guarantees of truthful earnestness do they give us ? What were the printed statements consulted ? What are we to say of a tribunal which bases its judgments on documents which it does not specify, and on papers referred to, of which it is only known that they have some sort of connection with the cause ?

"Spiritism, these gentlemen scientists know very well, is not a thing that is to be treated as a jest; and only the ignorant and the prejudiced can judge of it with such frivolity. Not without weighty reasons, and in consequence of experiments made in a very different spirit and manner, have the shepherds of souls, and the truly learned, felt bound to put the Christian world on its guard against this infernal pest. 'Spiritism,' as Signor Gaume observes, in his beautiful work, entitled *The Origin and Errors of Spiritism*, 'in its commencement appeared only as a divertissement, a play, a curiosity, and then became a great society which has its symbols, its rights, its statutes, its treasury, has many preachers and apostles. In America has twenty-two journals as its organs; five in France; in England several; the same in Germany, and even in Italy is not without them. Besides these periodical publications Spiritistic books of every price and form are issued adapted to all tastes; and these books are read with avidity, and diffused with indefatigable activity. Spiritism has its disciples in all classes of society; workmen, citizens, nobles, physicians, and even military men associate themselves with them voluntarily, and the number of its adepts increases every day in a fearful manner. From calculations made with the greatest possible exactness, the number of Spiritists amounts at present to five millions.

"'If,' continues Monsignor Gaume, 'we add the still greater number of Secret Societies, which bind their members by oath to destroy Christianity, is it not manifest that the Church finds itself at this moment enveloped by the crowds of the city of the devil, and that all social order is threatened by some unheard-of catastrophe?'

"But to return to the Scientific Commission of Petersburg. We may be permitted to ask whether it be wise or decorous to consider such and so great an order of facts as a simple display of jugglery? In this respect Littré has been less irrational. He has conceded that facts of a most extraordinary nature are in question, and to explain them he has had recourse to the theory of an epidemic! When we have leisure, it will give us pleasure to make known to our readers this other fine discovery of modern science."

On the idea entertained of Spiritualism by the Roman Catholic Church, we need not comment. It is familiar to all readers. It is sufficient for us that whilst it disputes our interpretation of these phenomena, it agrees with us that they are real. In this respect it stands in the same relation to Spiritualism as the Jews stand to Christianity. The Jews continue to deny Christianity, but exist and continue as a

perpetual proof of the history on which it is founded. The Catholic Church awards us as the black side of Spiritualism, but maintains fairly with us, and on the basis of the same wide field of experiment, that Spiritualism is real. We can, therefore, tolerate its thrusts at us, whilst we witness the thrusts at the scientists; and we may quote them with satisfaction on the old classical principle, *ab hoste doceri*.

"The scientists," says the *Osservatore Romano*, in a prior article, have treated this question in their usual way, and it is pleasant to hear them talk of the lucidity of the senses hidden in the human constitution; of the agility of the magnetic fluid; of the nervous aura; of optical and acoustic undulations; of the recondite action which electricity or magnetism excites in the brain, in the blood, in the fibres, in all vital parts; of the powers and forces of the will, and of the imagination."

That is to say, they have babbled charmingly of "brain-waves," "unconscious cerebration," "psychic force," and the like, as in England; just as our Carpenters and Coxes have done, only in other phraseology. We have no monopoly of such clever fellows. But the Vatican laughs at all this superfine much-a-do about nothing; this philosophy of wire-drawn fancies, these gossamer and cobweb-metaphysics, as much as we do, and know that Spiritualism is Spiritualism, and neither more nor less.

The haunted house which the *Osservatore Romano* alludes to, is a house in the very centre of Rome, in the Corso itself. For a long time this house has been deserted, on account of real or pretended ghostly visitations. One floor, at least, for it was curious that the other floors were all inhabited by different families, who were in no way molested. Several families, one after another, had fled out of this suite of apartments; and the last occupant, an artist, declared that in the night his paints had all been mixed; the picture on his easel daubed over with his own colours; and, finally, himself severely beaten by an invisible hand.

The gentleman just mentioned volunteered to sit up for a night in this ill-famed suite of rooms, and did so, taking, at my recommendation, a fellow Spiritualist with him. They neither saw nor heard anything. Then the Municipality did what it ought to have done long ago, sent two carbineers to sit up for a night, and the report was, that they had heard knockings in the basement story, and going down had captured three thieves endeavouring to cut through the wall into the next shop—a jeweller's. At first the affair appeared likely to turn out one of the class so familiar to the Germans as the work of *Polter-Giester*, and of which Paris has had such remarkable examples, confirmed

by the police, to say nothing of English and American cases. The report of the police and the vicinity of the jeweller's shop seemed to satisfy the public. The apartments were again inhabited. Still, no newspaper that I could see or hear of confirmed the report of the captured thieves, though all had been very ready to suggest such a solution of the mystery. Moreover, one naturally asks how should the thieves demand many months to effect their object, and find it necessary to frighten several families from the house, before attempting the entrance into the jeweller's shop; when once having done this, the way was open to their operations? How happened it, too, that the painter was beaten, and yet did not see or hear his assailant? How happened it that the thieves, in a house still containing three or four families on different floors, could conceal themselves, night after night, during many months, and still do nothing towards their object? These queries demand answers, and I should not be at all surprised to hear of another hasty exodus of the new tenants.

Soon after this affair came the telegram of Mr. D. D. Home having suddenly died in a railway train. My Spiritualistic friend above mentioned spoke to me of it as a sad event, and it was a sight to see his face when assured that it was a mere hoax. The *Opinione*, a leading Roman paper, having given the false news, my friend called upon the editor, and requested him to insert a contradiction; but the editor, so ready to ring Mr. Home's knell, was not so ready to recall him to life again. He must have as positive authority the sight of a letter from Mr. Home, confirming the fact of his being alive. He was immediately furnished with a view of two, the latter mentioning the number of American newspapers which Mr. Home had received containing obituary notices, all of a regretful and laudatory character. "Ha!" said the editor, "I am quite satisfied that the news of Mr. Home's death was false; but as I quoted it from a public journal, I must wait to contradict it on the authority of a public journal."

The newspaper editor is the same all the world over. It is not the *Times* or the *Standard*, or any other newspaper, only which burkes unwelcome intelligence; the genus is of all nations. The true and trustworthy journalists on whom the public depend for its daily intelligence, and which believes them in all lands "lie like truth, and yet most truly lie."

So much for the external foes of the "Open Vision;" of "The Gates Ajar;" of the simple and practical evidence of our being spirits in bodies, and not mere bodies; walking, talking, worthless and objectless automata. Would to heaven that the internal foes were as thoroughly harmless! But they are the

enemies of our own house who give force and point to the otherwise forceless and pointless onslaught of the scientific, the bigotted, the ignorant, and the base. How fully do the lying spirits, lying mediums, the resuscitations of pagan superstitions and absurdities, the sensual doctrines and moral abominations of Spiritualists, confirm the dicta of the Roman Catholic Church, and of many Protestant clergymen and writers, that Spiritualism is of the devil! Certainly no honest Spiritualist can deny that the devil has a large and wide-spread activity in it. And if Spiritualism should fail of its great object, the overthrow of Materialism, and become a scorn and a bye-word with the wise and the good, it will owe its fall not to the enemies without, but to the traitors within. The triumph of the enemies of soul, and the realisation of the predictions of the Jesuit hierarchists, who work incessantly to obfuscate and dominate soul, can only come from those who believe indeed, but believe with a morbid and perpetual bias to the mis-shapen and the false in ethics and religion.

HYMNS FOR THE SPIRITUAL CHURCH.

MAGNA EST VERITAS.

THE prophet in an age of lies
Who speaks God's word without
disguise,
May rot in prison—hated, feared,
Yet shall his name be long revered.

The sage who in the market-place
Rebukes the sophist to his face,
May perish; his philosophy
Far-famed for centuries shall be.

He who the Truth brought from on high,
A malefactor's death must die;
Yet millions in His name shall pray:
He rules our deepest heart to-day.

Good Friday, 1876.

Truth is immortal! neither sword,
Nor martyr-fires, nor force, nor fraud,
Nor all the mighty power of sin,
Can quench that mightier life within!

Magna est veritas, indeed!

For Truth contains the living seed
That still shall germinate and grow,
And ripen in all winds that blow.

Our inward strength, our constant
stay,

Our rest at night, our joy by day;
Against it every arm must fail:
Truth is of God and shall prevail!

WHIT SUNDAY.

AN INVOCATION.

O SPIRIT! Comforter! descend
Into the bruised, bereaved heart;
Thy balm of healing influence send,
For all-compassionate Thou art!

And troubled is the stream of life,
And all about our daily path,
And in the heart itself, is strife:
And by our side stands waiting—
Death!

Spirit! we lift our hands to Thee,
For consolation, peace, and rest;
Touch with Thy tender clemency
The weary heart, the aching breast!

So may we feel nor height, nor deep.
Nor death, with idle terror fraught,
The soul from God's dear love can keep,
As in His Gospel Christ has taught!

T.S.

NEW ESSAYS ON OLD SUBJECTS.

BY NEWTON CROSLAND.

No. II.—MORTIFICATION OF THE FLESH.

THERE is in active existence a certain class of pseudo-philosophers who love to discourse elaborately upon the great distinction which they conceive is apparent between one set of "thinkers," termed "Materialists," and another set termed "Spiritualists." I am at a loss to know why there should be these two hostile camps, and why there should be this division and antagonism. Why can we not reconcile Materialism and Spiritualism, and accept them both as a precious and loyal brotherhood? To aim at being all Materialist or all Spiritualist, is as senseless as to wish to be deprived of one-half our faculties.

We know that God made us both material and spiritual. Let us cultivate ourselves in accordance with this knowledge, and not seek occasion to be ashamed of either moiety of our nature. The same pseudo-philosophers, to whom we are indebted for so much profitless analysis of spirit and matter—creations and principles which ought never to be divorced in any useful and practical teaching—have of late complacently prattled away, with characteristic flippancy and fluency, on another metaphysical aberration which we can only describe as an attempt of the Mind to analyse itself. This last literary craze has occupied the misdirected attention, the learned shallowness, and profound charlatanism of some men, who, with mournful irony, are accounted "thinkers," and who have, unfortunately, nothing better to do than to parade and ventilate their wordy, worthless and afflicting eccentricity in newspapers, magazines, and big books, whose leaves we turn over with a sad elevation of the eyebrows. What else can we do with such confusing and confounding "thinkers?" The poor creatures are dead to experience and demonstration; and although they may be a little troublesome, they are comparatively harmless. Common sense is in no ultimate danger from their disquisitions.

These straw-crowned metaphysical monarchs can always be known at once by their phraseology. Their favourite cant is conveyed in such expressions as "mental problems;" "scientific method;" "modern thought;" "reflex action;" "unconscious cerebration," and such like jargon, which is cunningly devised to impress the reader with a vast opinion of their supreme qualifications for the guidance of mankind.

One of the unfortunate indirect results of thus setting up an antagonism between Matter and Spirit, is manifested in a

certain morbid form of religion which inculcates the blessedness of "the mortification of the flesh." Now, there can be no doubt that, to a proper and temperate degree, the animal nature of man ought to be subject to his higher mental and moral powers, but only by cultivation, not suppression. Human beings could not consort together if they allowed their inclinations to run riot, and their wants to be satisfied at any cost. Civilisation means wholesome restraint, so that each member of a community shall make some sacrifice for the general good, and peoples live together in harmony; our appetites and passions must be so trained, that we shall not injure our neighbour by their indulgence; and the happiest civilisation is that which keeps us in the best order with the least trouble, and most swiftly and successfully punishes any infraction of the laws which control the well-being of society. There is, however, a set of persons who are not satisfied with this modest and moderate government. Having ascertained that rare spiritual gifts and privileges are sometimes vouchsafed as a recompense for bodily infirmity and suffering, they endeavour to attain a superabundance of these celestial advantages, by mortifying the flesh; they are willing to endure the physical penalty for the sake of the psychical rapture. This condition of ecstasy is, however, purchased at too high a price. True wisdom teaches us that God's purpose in our creation is best fulfilled by giving equal attention to the cultivation of all the faculties of man; his body, soul, and spirit must be taught to work together in this life without discord; and one part of his nature must not be allowed to tyrannize over another. Even though the special exercise of any particular gift in excess may be a temptation difficult to resist, it must be controlled, if we would taste a fair share of the joys of which humanity is capable, and which are equitably distributed through all the grades of being.

We are often told that "it is necessary to resort to self-denial and mortification for the purpose of subduing what is earthly and carnal in our human nature." But who is to decide what is unworthily earthly and carnal, and where shall we draw the line of the subduing discipline?

May we not, in our ignorance of what is right and wrong on this point, tamper with our souls, and irretrievably injure our bodies? If we resort to penance as a religious exercise, may we not, in attempting to trample out something we deem a sin, run the risk of letting into our souls some colossal enormity with a more injurious tendency—such, for instance, as fancying that our asceticism is acceptable in the eyes of God, and that we are doing him a service by conquering and

dispersing the natural appetites and instincts which he has implanted in us? May not this self-imposed mortification and self-conscious righteousness be the grand trump-card with which the Devil wins us away from the noble worship of Divine truth? I can imagine that there is nothing that Satan more deliberately and fascinatingly chuckles over, in a well-bred way, than any overstrained system of Sacramental penance. It favours the profound artifice with which he decoys us from our entrenchments, and compels us to do battle with him in the open. How? Simply by sapping our health and strength; by diminishing our power of doing the sturdy work of the world; and by setting us to dream of salvation in an ecstatic mood, instead of allowing us actively and joyfully to grapple with all the difficulties with which our path of life is crowded.

Let me illustrate my meaning and argument by a little story. I once knew a young lady who was comely and clever, attractive and lively in manner, correct and amiable in her conduct. She was kind to the poor; she worshipped God in a gentle, loving, earnest way. She was strong in mind and body, and she thoroughly and properly enjoyed the good things of this world; in short, she was just such a woman as God intended to people this earthly paradise. I believe that it was "a disappointment" that first turned the current of her life, and she flew to a gloomy form of religion as a source of consolation. She got a hold of wrong books, wrong teachers, wrong influences; and at last she decided that everything that gave her pleasure must necessarily be evil, and especially that anything in the shape of a "desire" must be mortified. She kept fast-days very strictly; went foodless to early and late Communion, and sacrificed her originally refined taste for dress. The want of proper physical sustenance and recreation soon rendered her irritable, especially in her own family; and not perceiving that debility of body was the cause of her loss of temper, she considered that she had not done enough to crush her passions and to crucify her sinful nature; accordingly, she plunged into still greater depths of self-immolation. A plump saint, in hearty condition, with a good appetite, and a face beaming with smiles, could never, she imagined, enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. She still humanely visited the sick and afflicted, but, unfortunately, she carried to them the same lugubrious, ill-directed consolation which she perversely thought was working out her own redemption. Disregard of the ordinary rules of health has finally rendered her a permanent invalid. She is now an anxious, care-worn, uncomfortable, religious disciplinarian, the victim of a mistaken theory. If, when her first trouble visited her, she had known and felt that

true religion is a relief, a restorative, and a source of joy, not a cruel task-master, not a punishing rod, she might easily have recovered from her depressing sorrow; but she rushed into a state of trial only fit for the correction of spiritual malefactors of the coarsest type. Naturally people who are satisfied that a certain course which they have adopted is the right one, will rarely be converted from their belief by citing any special instance calculated to prove the error of their convictions. They will always be ready to say at some turning point in the moral of the story, "Ah, we should have avoided such a mistake;" or, "there your hero was injudicious and misguided;" or, "here he was wanting in knowledge and faith;" so that we debaters can seldom promise ourselves much success in attempting to overthrow a creed by a controversy. Truth will grow or decay, flourish or fade, according to the soil in which it is planted. The winds of doctrine will not help it much; they will only blow it about hither and thither. Let us beware, however, of one great cardinal error, that of supposing that any "system" will ever turn out such a saint as would be acceptable to a high ideal of religious worthiness.

We are constantly told that "Suffering is frequently a necessary part of a religious life." Granted: but I altogether oppose the doctrine that this suffering may be rightly sought or self-imposed. I accept the sentence that "through much tribulation we enter into the Kingdom of God;" but this tribulation must not be of our own manufacture—it must be sent to us from above, as a test of our faith, and as a test of our Christian virtue. Endurance of affliction is part of the discipline of our souls, and is intended to develop the heroism of our natures; but let us observe carefully how this grand scheme of Redemption has been abused, falsified, and corrupted. Fakeers, Jews, Mahometans, certain sects of so-called Christians, and fanatics of all denominations, in all ages and all countries, have imposed upon themselves mortifications, penances, fastings, lacerations, vigils—thinking and hoping thereby to make themselves more acceptable servants of the Most High. Now, I believe that our Saviour came on purpose to put a stop to this miserable, stupid, and wicked delusion. In His own person He endured the repentant sufferings of all mankind, for all time; and He came avowedly to teach us, that, to cast off the troubles, cares and anxieties connected with our salvation, we have nothing to do but to bring them to Him in prayer. When in the Garden of Gethsemane He had sufficiently conquered "the world, the flesh and the devil;" He told His followers that they might "sleep on *now* and take their rest." From that moment the infliction of suffering ceased to be a badge of anything deserving to be

called a religion. Belief and repentance became the only method of properly propitiating Deity ; and henceforth religion was intended to be a mission of peace, joy, and love.

The temple of our Saviour is not a torture-chamber. His service is essentially that of "cheerfulness and good will." His mission is to bring "glad tidings;" and I can quite conceive that there is no sinner whom He would treat with so little regard as one who approached Him with a sunken cheek and a lacerated shoulder, and said to Him, "Lord, I imposed these mortifications upon myself for Thy sake, and in imitation of Thy example ; accept my penance as an atonement for my sins !"

I am presumptuous enough to imagine that our Saviour would receive, with His most rebuking look, such a perverse devotee, and say to him, "Depart from me—you are one of my greatest enemies. You have altogether failed to apprehend my mission : you have failed to accept the simplest elements of the truths I came to teach the world : you have failed to feel the full value of the atonement I alone offered once for all ! You have set up as a miniature spurious Saviour on your own account. The thief on the cross is more worthy of heaven than you are : he had more faith in me than you have. But, stay !—although I rebuke sinners, I cannot harbour eternal animosity against them. Because you thought you were acting rightly, you are worth saving. I wish all mankind to know that 'my yoke is easy and my burden light !' Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord !"

The Gospel of gloom, sadness and suffering, which is a contradiction in terms, must be dispelled by the higher Gospel of light, life, and gladness.

RANDOM THOUGHTS IN RHYME.— MY CONFESSION.

BY THOMAS BREVIOR.

I'VE lived in the world over half a century,
And useful have found it to keep an inventory
Of some things I have seen, and of books I have read,
And of notions and thoughts that came into my head.

My reflections to novelty make no pretension,
But if you should deem they are worth your attention,
I trust you will kindly receive my Confession,
Without either prejudice or prepossession.

The practice of making Confession auricular
By Churchmen and ladies, is not thought particular,
But is rather the fashion ; if no harm there is in't,
Pray why should not I make my Confession in print ?

I've no scandals to tell—for thy neighbours' affairs
Is no business of thine, gentle reader,—but theirs ;
So whether I may speak of the present or past,
I shall still—like the shoemaker—stick to my last.

Nor shall I unbosom my own peccadilloes,
My Confessions will not be like Jean Jacques Rousseau's ;
Nor do I ask absolution of even the Pope,
Though indulgence, kind reader, from you I may hope.

I do not intend this (as the patterers say)
For my "Last Dying Speech and Confession ;" that way
I am not much inclined—and betwixt me and you,
As to dying, that is quite the last thing I shall do.

I make my Confession in the full confidence
That my father confessor's a man of good sense ;
That I'm right the plain proof in your hand you may see,—
You're a sensible man, or you would not read me.

Amid sunshine and storm have the years rolled away,
Republics and empires have in turn had their day ;
Revolutions and wars, with increase of taxes,
Our world, too, has seen as it turned on its axis.

Aye, the sun has gone down upon many a scene
Of destruction and carnage, and fearful has been
The guilt and the terror, the wild desolation,
With hell-fire burning in the heart of a nation !

But if dearly it has its experience bought,
It may prize all the more what the ages have taught ;
Its wisdom-teeth one may hope the world has now gained,
Though much of unwisdom I fear has remained.

I hold it folly and madness for nations to fight,
And let gunpowder settle all question of right ;
Because kings are unable their feuds to determine,
Their subjects, forsooth, must be shot down like vermin !

I deem as deserving of all reprobation,
A barbarous relic of civilization,
The black gallows-tree—with its burden of fruit,
The fatal seed of which but too often takes root !

I think it unwise to enforce uniformity,
When no two grains of sand are found quite to agree :
I don't expect you to dance to tunes I may pipe,
And I don't admire minds cast in stereotype.

I commend all endeavour on fitting occasion,
By fair use of argument and of persuasion,
To win men from tippie to perfect sobriety,—
A blessing alike to themselves and society.

But to enforce temperance by intemperate speech,
That knows no moderation, is surely a breach
Of sense and decorum, which defeats its own ends,
And alienates many who might else be its friends.

'Tis not only the fanatic "I. O. G. T.,"
But men who affect to be up in philosophy,
Professors of science—who are as dogmatic
As a Latter-Day Saint, or sect in an attic.

In short, I may say without fear of offending,
Our system and ways display much that needs mending ;
I am Radical—yet am Conservative too,—
They are halves of a whole—if I'm right in my view.

I don't see with the optimist *couleur de rose*,
Nor yet feel like the cynic who snarls as he goes ;
I have had my full share of misfortune, no doubt,
But when night was at darkest the stars have shone out.

A poor craven is he who endeavours to shirk
What may come to his share of the world's daily work ;
And whether it were labour of hand or of brain,
I have done what I could and should scorn to complain.

I have found it a very good world on the whole,
Caring more for affairs of the body than soul ;
Save on Sunday at church, or when going to die,—
Then we often see things with a different eye.

I've read books not a few—and found some of them wise,
And a great many more that were contrariwise ;
Both sermon and play I have often attended,
And seldom been grieved when the former was ended.

I scribble sometimes both in prose and in verse,
Or, as Jerrold once put it—in "prose and in worse ;"
I take a keen interest in sociology,
Poetry, politics, ethics, psychology.

I own that, like many an able reviewer,
In music and art I am no connoisseur ;
But a picture well painted, a ballad well sung,
My most favourite pleasures I reckon among.

I confess that of science I've nothing to vaunt,
Of stars, atoms, plants, fossils, my knowledge is scant ;
Yet Nature from my childhood was ever to me
A great wonder, a joy, and a deep mystery.

The brave Earth still so young, and the Heavens so old,
The cloud pictures so gorgeous in crimson and gold,
The high hills, woods and waters; all gleaming with light,
The young Day in his glory, the gloom of the Night ;

The white Moon sailing on in the ocean of blue,
The flowers fair and fragrant of every hue,
The young buds which peep out at the coming of Spring,
The golden grain and rich fruit which the Autumn doth bring ;

The sweet song of the skylark, the hum of the bee,
The grand arch of the rainbow, the mountain, the sea,
Fill my heart with emotion and rapture so strong
That it leaps into music and bursts into song !

Still, with Johnson, I like more the study of men,
The whence, wherefore, and whither—the how and the when ;
To read all their best side is my favourite plan,
Their foibles and faults I leave others to scan.

And if some entertainment I venture to draw
From their whimsical fancies and fashions, still more
Their kindly virtues, in my poor estimation,
May call out our sympathy and admiration.

In metaphysical science a little I dabbled,
 And though not a few of its eggs I found addled ;
 A right royal study I hold it to be,
 Despite Monsieur Comte and his school of philosophy.

In political questions I meddled, and next
 With some problems far deeper my spirit I vexed ;
 Like much wiser men—I own with humility—
 To solve them I found surpassed my ability.

In schemes of world-mending I once took great delight,
 But the obstinate universe would not go right ;
 Many castles I builded high up in the air,
 But the wind has soon blown them—I hardly know where.

Then I took to the “stump” to enlighten mankind,
 But in vain—men were all so provokingly blind ;
 Much foolscap I filled with the same good intention,
 But somehow success did not crown my invention.

I would sometimes a signal of danger display,
 It was all of no use, the world went its old way ;
 Like the Antediluvian who hinted to Noah
 He thought there was not to be much of a shower.

Now in different vein I pursue my reflections,
 And avow what the world calls “queer predilections ;”
 But I don't bow to the world as authority,
 And always expect to be in the minority.

I find movement and rest each in turn a great boon,
 The man always a-stirring is surely a spoon ;
 I can not sympathise with “advanced minds” who seek
 A brand-new Christianity every week.

I own I'm suspicious of “new lamps for old ones,”
 Oft Brummagem gilt made to pass off for gold ones ;
 To your grief when too late you may find, like Aladdin,
 What a wonderful treasure the old lamp you had in !

Yet more light and new friends are still welcome to me,
 I labour from cobwebs my mind to keep free ;
 I'm not an old fogey to prefer what is fusty,
 My eggs I like new-laid, not when stale and musty.

But “old friends and old wine are the best for old age,”
 An excellent proverb, very ancient and sage ;
 Let your friend be but true, and the wine be but good,
 And the talk be both merry and wise—as it should !

Truth may, like old wine, be the better for keeping,
 But it need not, like wine, in your cellar be sleeping ;
 Fill your cup to the brim, let it pass freely round,
 'The more deeply you quaff it the more 'twill abound !

Of foes, I know not that I ever had any,
 Of warm-hearted friends I am sure I have many ;
 And when I retire from life's banquet for ever,
 It will be with contentment and thanks to the Giver !

See, the sun has gone down, and the gloaming has come,
 Soon the hour must be near of departure for home :
 A warm grasp of your hand ere I bid you “good-night ;”
 I will greet you “good-morn,” in the new world of light.

OCCASIONAL LEAVES FROM MY NOTE BOOK.

IN my last notes I published portions of a correspondence between myself and Mr. Maskelyne, copied from the *Malton Messenger*. After my letter which has been already printed, appeared, Mr. Maskelyne again returned to the charge. His second communication, however, consisted mainly of a reiteration of the statement that the conjuring tricks which I exposed had no reference to Spiritualism, and that everything that was done by spirit mediums could be done by him, was in fact done by him and that his entertainment was conducted under more severe tests than Spiritualists ever submit to. This, together with some bunkum respecting his having offered me £100 if I could expose the secret of his box, constituted the sum total of his letter, with the exception of two or three choice bits of spiteful personality, which I pass over as unworthy of notice. To this communication I sent the following reply, which appeared in the *Malton Messenger* of May 6th.

To the Editor of the "Malton Messenger."

SIR,—I do not know that anything can be gained to the public by prolonging the useless controversy as to how far jugglers can imitate spiritual manifestations. It is a point that any person can settle for himself. I strongly advised, when at Malton—as in fact I invariably do in all my lectures—such persons as might be desirous of learning the truth on this great question to ignore alike the bombastic talk of jugglers and the pretensions of professional mediums, and to try the experiment for themselves in their own family circles, where they are quite sure that no trickery can exist. By this means they may easily learn how much the impudent boasting of conjurors is worth. By the way, one wonders what these said conjurors would do were they to succeed in accomplishing what they say they are aiming at, *viz.*, the destruction of Spiritualism. The only tricks that any of them find at all successful in drawing audiences are those which pretend to be an exposure of spiritual manifestations. Should Spiritualism cease, then indeed Othello's occupation would be gone.

The writer of the letter in your last, reminds me of the fly on the wheel, who, as the carriage rolled along exclaimed, "See what a dust I make." He seems to labour under the delusive idea that he is the only conjuror living, that all reference to juggling tricks must have some special allusion to himself, and that in my exposure I had no apparatus but such as I got for the purpose of explaining what he, with a coolness that is perfectly amusing, calls his "*original cabinet and box business*;" the said cabinet illusion being, as I have stated in my printed pamphlet, as old as looking-glasses, and the box trick in existence before he was born. Why there are at least a dozen conjurors at the present day procuring their livelihood by pretended exposures of Spiritualism, and what I did was to explain the tricks of the whole of them. The absurd talk about the £100 challenge to point out the secret of a particular box is simply intended to mislead. As the box opens by a secret spring or lock, of course no one can tell exactly where such spring is but the maker and those to whom he may have imparted the information. But this in no way affects the principle. No conjuror can open my box, and yet all of them know precisely the method by which it is done. There are twenty such boxes in existence at the present time, and being regularly exhibited to the public, each one of which opens by a secret method only known to the exhibitor, but all of which are formed upon exactly the same principle. Should any of your readers desire to possess a box of this character,

I shall be very happy to tell him of a manufacturer or two who supply the conjurors themselves, or what is better give him such instructions as will enable him to get one made by any ordinary carpenter. The statement that the tricks I exposed had "no reference to Spiritualism" is again repeated. This every one who saw the exposure will know to be utterly untrue. Every trick that I exposed had been shown publicly as an explanation of how spiritual manifestations were obtained. The very cabinet trick referred to in the letter under consideration was for some years performed in the provinces as a pretended exposure of the Davenport Brothers.

What I stated in my last letter I repeat here, that "no conjuror will even attempt to perform his tricks under the same conditions that mediums are subject to." This is replied to by some tall talk about "our entertainment" and the severe tests" there employed. Exactly! the whole thing resolves itself into an advertisement of "our entertainment." But what we request is that the conjurors shall leave "our entertainment," and come into a room in a private house without their apparatus, and then we shall see what will become of their tricks. This is what spirit mediums do, as tens of thousands of persons can testify.

Yours &c.,

GEORGE SEXTON.

London, May 1st, 1876.

While on this subject I may remark that these Egyptian Hall jugglers have just issued a trashy publication, which is quite in keeping with the rest of their doings for the amount of falsehood and misrepresentations which it contains. As a matter of course, I come in for a large share of abuse and slander in its pages. Calumny appears to constitute the very atmosphere which these men breathe; and the dissemination of all kinds of scandalous and mendacious rumours, calculated to damage the reputation of those persons who have had the temerity to expose their arrogant pretensions, they revel in, as though it were their chief source of enjoyment. Not that one should wonder at this. As there are animals that grow fat on offal and the garbage of the sewers, so there are human beings who could not live out of an atmosphere reeking with calumny and false charges against men whose very superiority is their offence. Besides, it has always been the fate of those who unmask shams and denounce wrong to be evil spoken of, persecuted, and made the victims of slander of the deepest dye. For has not the poet informed us that

The man whose hardy spirit shall engage
To lash the vices of a guilty age,
At his first setting forward, ought to know
That every rogue he meets must be his foe.

Several provincial newspapers have occupied their columns with notices of Mr. Maskelyne's farrago of rubbish; and some of them, not having the fear of the law of libel before their eyes, have injudiciously copied long extracts from its pages. Amongst these the *Bradford Observer* happened to quote the very part referring to myself; and, as this paper is known to be a highly respectable journal with a large circulation, a slander inserted in its columns would be likely to do a great amount of harm to the person maligned. I, therefore, at once put myself

in communication with the proprietor, and informed him that unless he apologised, within three days, for the false statements that he had inadvertently copied, I should take legal proceedings against him. This had the desired effect, and the following appeared on the 17th instant:—

"*Modern Spiritualism*:" Dr. Sexton.—On the 3rd of June we noticed in our literary column a little book, entitled *Modern Spiritualism*. The subject being one of considerable local interest, we made larger extracts than, perhaps, the intrinsic merit of the volume justified. Among other extracts was one relating to Dr. Sexton, a gentleman not entirely unknown in Bradford. In making this extract we gave no opinion as to its verisimilitude. Its averments were the author's, not ours. But Dr. Sexton considers himself aggrieved. He affirms that the statements embodied in the extract are slanderous and untrue, and he calls upon us to contradict them. As we know nothing about the circumstances, either *pro* or *con*, we cannot, of course, do that, but we readily allow Dr. Sexton's disclaimer to appear in our columns; and whenever he shall furnish us with a more detailed and effective denial we shall publish that. Meanwhile we have no hesitation in expressing our regret if we have, however unwittingly, done anything that might unjustly detract from Dr. Sexton's reputation.

On April 27th, I lectured for the third time this year for the Brixton Psychological Society, at the Angell Town Institute, Brixton. My subject on this occasion was, "The Mission of Spiritualism," and the lecture was well received. Several questions were asked at the close, most of them being put by persons who were evidently Swedenborgians with a view to ascertain what my opinions were upon the subject of the Nature of the Soul, the Character of the Future Life, the Resurrection of the Body, &c. When it was found, however, that my views on these subjects were the same as those of the questioners, they expressed themselves highly satisfied and much pleased. On Sunday the 30th, I took for my subject at the Cavendish Rooms, the "Life and Writings of the late Dr. E. H. Sears," one of the most remarkable men that this age has produced, and who passed away from earth to his Everlasting Home during the present year. Dr. Sears will probably be best known to the readers of this Magazine, as the author of *Foregleams and Foreshadows of Immortality*, and to the English religious public through having written a most charming little volume on *Regeneration* several cheap editions of which have been issued in this country. His greatest work, however, by far, but one which is not very extensively known in England, is the *Fourth Gospel, the Heart of Christ*. I do not remember any author whose writings produced so powerful an effect upon my own mind as those of Dr. Sears. They seem to have come to me like light from heaven, during my period of transition from scepticism to faith, and to have been all-potent in helping me on the road to the higher life. I made a mistake perhaps in supposing that other persons felt the same interest in this great

and good man that I did, as the congregation on the occasion of my delivering the discourse was not over large. Still that good was done I know, for one lady, a regular attendant who had long felt most serious and almost insurmountable difficulties in the way of accepting the Deity of Christ, confessed to me at the close of the Discourse that all her doubts had been removed by the clear statement which I had made of the Logos doctrine as enunciated by Dr. Sears, and as held in fact, not only by the early Christian church, but by the Old Testament writers and expounded in the Hebrew Targums. I trust some enterprising publisher will issue a cheap edition of the works of Dr. Sears, and should no one be found to do this, I shall probably undertake the task myself. In any case, the Discourse on his Life and Writings I hope to deliver many times, and ultimately to publish.

On May 1st I left London for Rushden, in Northamptonshire, where I was to lecture on that evening, and to debate with Dr. Collett on the following evening. The subject of my lecture was, "How I became a Spiritualist." There was a good attendance, the lecture was well received, and everything passed off very harmoniously. It was evident, however, that the principal interest was being felt in the expected debate of the following night, the only drawback to which was the doubt in the minds of many persons whether Dr. Collett would really attend. It is only fair to him, however, to say that he had not promised to do so, and that the bills announcing the discussion had been got out by the Rushden Spiritualists, on the ground that he had announced publicly that whenever a Spiritualistic lecturer came to Rushden he should be there to oppose him. Dr. Collett, it seems, is a Baptist minister at Ringstead, a few miles from Rushden, and he appears to look upon it as a portion of his mission to put down Spiritualism. He had given one or two lectures on the subject before I went, and had held a kind of debate with Mr. Mahoney of Birmingham, the result of which appears to have been highly satisfactory to the Anti-Spiritualists, who considered that Spiritualism was thenceforth and for ever completely extinguished. In the last lecture that Dr. Collett gave at Rushden he informed his hearers that he came to bury Spiritualism, and that after that they would hear no more of it. Doubtless by this time he has discovered that his funeral service was performed over a living and not a dead body, which has now arisen with renewed vigour to bring confusion upon him for his blunder. Certain it is that Spiritualism is at the present time in a more flourishing condition at Rushden than it ever has been before. On the night of the debate the Temperance Hall was crowded to suffocation, many being unable to gain admission. Great numbers of persons had

travelled many miles to witness the contest, and even special reporters came all the way from Northampton, although there was no means of their getting back again the same night. The chair was occupied by Dr. J. H. Blunt, of Northampton. I had never seen Dr. Collett, and was, therefore, somewhat surprised when I found him to be a rather spare young man of not more than five or six and twenty, and with a decidedly boyish appearance. When one hears a person spoken of as the Rev. Dr. So-and-so, he is apt to picture to himself a staid, middle-aged man. This is, perhaps, an error, but it is, nevertheless, very general. The chairman proceeded to announce that I was there to lecture, in case no opponent should be present, but that if there were any they must at once send up their names. Immediately afterwards Dr. Collett handed in his card, and Mr. Lees, the *soi-disant* ex-medium, also sent up his name. The chairman having informed the audience that there were two, said of course I couldn't debate with both, whereupon I exclaimed, "Oh yes, I can," which caused a good deal of laughter. Mr. Lees, however, stated his willingness to give way to Dr. Collett, and it was consequently arranged that he and I should have equal time throughout the evening. The only condition that I claimed was that I should have the last speech, but in order that this should give me no undue advantage I offered for Dr. Collett to open the debate if he felt inclined to do so, which, however, he declined. It was therefore arranged that I should open for half an hour, that Dr. Collett should be allowed the same time to reply, and that after that the speeches should be each a quarter of an hour in length. In my opening speech I dealt mainly with the scientific basis of Spiritualism. I took this ground, because Dr. Collett had in his lecture and in some letters which he wrote in the Wellingboro' paper, selected this as his mode of attack. He had stated that Spiritualism was utterly opposed to science, and that all the phenomena could be explained by Odic Force. He had in fact paraded this term Odic Force so frequently and in such strange connections, that I much doubted whether he knew the meaning of the term which he thus so glibly bandied about. I determined consequently to put this matter to the test, and accordingly in my opening speech I demanded that, if my opponent should fall back for an explanation of what we term spiritual manifestations upon any natural but occult force, he should explain to us its nature and give us the method by which he demonstrated its existence. He had elsewhere stated that, while scientific men utterly rejected spirit as the cause of the phenomena, they were all agreed in the existence of Odic Force. I pointed out that this statement was entirely incorrect and displayed a lamentable ignorance of the views held

by scientific men, for that in truth as a rule they no more believed in Odic Force than in spirit, the one being according to their view quite as imaginary as the other. As I anticipated Dr. Collett knew nothing of Odic Force, it was simply a word that he had been parading in the absence of any idea on the subject, and during the debate he very wisely avoided all reference to it. I spoke for half an hour, and being at the end of that time in the middle of an argument was allowed five minutes more to conclude. The Chairman informed the audience that as I had taken five and thirty minutes the same time would be allowed to Dr. Collett for reply. On rising, he was vociferously cheered by some half dozen of his partisans, and moderately by a large portion of the meeting. He had not been speaking however for five minutes, before it must have been apparent to every intelligent person, that he really had not anything to say. He commenced by asking me to define a spirit—a line of argument which one might have expected from a materialist but could hardly have been prepared to hear adopted by a Christian minister. He also desired to know whether spirit was subject to natural law and how it operated on nature. Having talked around these three questions for fifteen minutes he quietly sat down, saying he had finished and should leave the rest to me, which created considerable confusion and no little merriment. The Chairman expressed himself very much surprised that Dr. Collett should have clamoured for equal time with me as he had done at the commencement and now was only able to occupy fifteen minutes. This appeared like partiality on the part of the Chairman and gave rise to a great deal of uproar. Order was however, soon obtained, and I delivered my second speech. I pointed out that the only questions asked by Dr. Collett were such as could not legitimately arise as between him and me, seeing that they dealt with matters upon which we were both agreed. Dr. Collett being a Christian minister, necessarily believed in spirit, and accepting the Bible as a Divine Revelation, must of course admit that spirits had frequently operated on matter whether by natural law or not. Besides it was clear, I maintained, that even if I admitted my inability to explain the *modus operandi* of a fact, it in no way lessened the value of the fact itself, since the why and the wherefore of even the simplest phenomena in nature were unknown. Despite this, however, I would answer his three questions; which I did, at too great a length to introduce here. Dr. Collett was now called on for his second speech, when it became again apparent that he had really nothing to say. I had already stated in my opening speech, that I declined to be held responsible for any opinions entertained by Spiritualists in general, or

advocated in any spiritual publications except my own. That, as Spiritualists differ upon a great variety of topics, each one must be held accountable for his own utterances, and that as my writings on the subject were somewhat numerous, there were plenty of them to quote from without dealing with the works of other men. Despite this fact, Dr. Collett proceeded to quote from the *Medium*, something which he said was opposed to Christianity, and to read at length from a small tractate issued apparently by the Birmingham Spiritualists, containing rules for the guidance of persons forming *séances*. In any case this had no possible bearing on the subject of the debate, and the object for which it was quoted I have not yet been able to make out. Whilst he was reading it, he exclaimed at the conclusion of one of the paragraphs, "This is what the book says," upon which I asked the question, "My book?" "Oh, no!" he replied, "not Dr. Sexton's book," but mind, he added, "Dr. Sexton is at liberty to accept or to reject this, whichever he pleases," upon which I observed, "Well I reject it," "Oh," he remarked in some confusion, "Dr. Sexton rejects it. I am very much obliged to him for the information. He rejects it. Well, now, then, I shall know what to do." And he went on with his reading. What it was that he intended to do having obtained from me the admission, never appeared; for having finished his reading, he again sat down before his time had expired. And in this way the debate, if it be not absurd to call it by that name, proceeded to the close. The effrontery of this man may be judged of by the following trifling circumstance if there were no other. The Chairman having observed to the audience, that as no conclusion had been arrived at with regard to the hour at which the debate should close, he would like to know their views on the subject. Whereupon Dr. Collett shouted out in the coolest manner possible, "We'll keep on till daylight in the morning." Upon this I got up and observed, "It's all very well for Dr. Collett to talk about keeping on till daylight in the morning, but who is to do the talking all through the night? He hasn't been able to occupy the small time that has already been allotted to him, and for him to talk therefore about going on till daylight in the morning is a sheer piece of impudence. I am willing to discuss all night, but at least I must have an opponent who can do his share of the talking, and moreover when he's speaking knows what he's talking about. Clearly Dr. Collett is not that man." The Chairman then announced that I would deliver the concluding speech, which I did. I'm sure the people of Rushden will bear me out when I say that Dr. Collett's own supporters were thoroughly ashamed of him. He knew nothing of the subject

on which he came to speak, and proved himself to be utterly ignorant of logic and the rules of debate. Indeed, he clearly did not understand the meaning of the words which he frequently used. In reply to my statement that he was placing himself in the position of an Atheist, he said, "I am an Atheist, an Atheist to Spiritualism," thereby using the term Atheist in the sense of antagonistic, which every schoolboy knows is foreign to the meaning. On another occasion, when he was ascribing to me certain opinions, I reminded him that I had not expressed those views in the debate. He jauntily remarked, "I learned it by induction," using the word which I had several times employed, but showing himself in so doing utterly ignorant of its meaning. When I sat down at the end of my last speech, the applause was so universal, that there could be no mistaking the fact that the anti-spiritual part of the audience, comprising as it did the large majority of those present were, if not convinced by my arguments, at least satisfied that I had conducted the debate in an unobjectionable manner. The remarks made in the meeting and afterwards in the street, showed clearly that Dr. Collett was considered to be done for as far as Spiritualism was concerned. The only supporters that he had left, as far as we could judge, were two Baptist ministers who accompanied him to the meeting, and who during the discussion, as I told them at the close, did more to create confusion and disorder than all the rest of the people put together. Extended reports of the debate appeared in the *Northampton* and *Wellingborough* papers. Despite the fact that Dr. Collett had cut so sorry a figure in this controversy, his usual effrontery displayed itself a few days afterwards, for in the *Northamptonshire Guardian* of May 13th, tacked on to the end of a report of some lectures, delivered by the so-called ex-medium Lees, I find the following absurd challenge:—

Ringstead, May 4th.

I, L. T. Collett, M. A., Ph. D., hereby challenge Dr. Sexton, M. A., F. A. S., F. Z. S., &c., to discuss the subject of "Spiritualism: an illusion," for two nights in the Rushden Temperance Hall, on any date to be fixed by himself (excepting Sundays). A Committee of Management and Chairman to be appointed between us, and the proceeds to be equally divided, if any, and all loss to be equally shared.

L. T. COLLETT, M. A., Ph. D.

To this piece of impudent boasting I sent the following reply, which appeared on May 20th:—

To the Editor.—Sir,—I am puzzled to know why Dr. Collett should have sent to you his challenge to discuss the truth of Spiritualism with me, unless for the purpose of ostentatiously parading his name before the public. A modest man desirous of debating a subject with a particular individual would have forwarded his challenge to the person concerned and not have inserted it with a flourish of trumpets in the columns of a newspaper where, in all probability, it

would never be seen by the challenged. There is no man living who is more ready to subject to the test of public discussion any opinion which he may hold than I am. This will be obvious to all who know me from the great number of debates in which I am continually being engaged. I am not bound, however, to meet every person who chooses to shout his absurd challenges into my ear in a spirit of insolent defiance and bombast, without any regard to his fitness for the post to which he aspires. Only a fortnight since I did meet this Dr. Collett on a public platform—I can hardly say in debate, for debate there was none—for the purpose of discussing Spiritualism, and the result was not such as to justify me in going out of my way to meet such an antagonist a second time. He clamoured for equal time with me, which I at once conceded. Then I spoke for thirty-five minutes, and, on sitting down, the Chairman—a townsman of your own—informed Dr. Collett that he would be allowed thirty-five minutes in reply. Judge of our surprise when, at the end of fifteen minutes, he quietly sat down having nothing more to say. Each of his after speeches was of a similar kind. In no case could he occupy his time. He simply knew nothing of the subject on which he came to talk, and to call such a contest a debate would be simply absurd. Let Dr. Collett or his friends find a competent man to discuss this question and I will meet him with pleasure, as he and they know well enough.

Yours obediently,

GEORGE SEXTON.

London, May 15th, 1876.

To this letter Dr. Collett sent a rambling reply, containing very little to the purpose. He declared that I had not discussed Spiritualism, but “Sextonianism,”—which of course simply meant that I had not accepted his definition of Spiritualism,—and that I had not answered his questions about spirit. He asserted that I was the servant of the “National Society,” meaning, I suppose, the “British National Association of Spiritualists,” which I most assuredly am not; and that I ought to defend Spiritualism as taught by this Association; thereby showing himself utterly unable to distinguish between the broad fact of spirit-communion upon which all Spiritualists are agreed, and a number of minor matters with which Spiritualism has not necessarily anything to do, and about which every variety of opinion is allowed. He further went on to say that I whispered to the Chairman to stop the debate,” which is utterly untrue, and that the Chairman threatened that I would give him a “physical thrashing,” which is amusing as well as false. To this precious rigmarole, Dr. Blunt sent the following reply, which appeared in the same paper:—

To the Editor.—Sir,—As Chairman of the so-called debate on Spiritualism at Rushden, between Dr. Sexton, of London, and Dr. Collett, of Ringstead, kindly allow me a small space in your next issue to contradict a statement of Dr. Collett, in which he says that Dr. Sexton whispered to me to stop the debate. In explanation allow me to say that it was I who asked Dr. Sexton if I should bring the discussion to a close (it being past ten o'clock), as it was useless for him (Dr. Sexton) to waste the time of the meeting by further discussion with a man who knew absolutely nothing of the subject he came to discuss; a man who did not even attempt to grapple with a single argument adduced by the lecturer, but who simply took up his time by asking a long string of questions, the nature and meaning of which he (the questioner) could not define nor understand. With regard to the threat of physical violence being offered to Dr. Collett, allow me to say that Dr. Collett must surely have a defective

memory, or he would not have uttered a statement so utterly devoid of truth. I certainly did, on Dr. Sexton rising for the last time to address the meeting, whisper to Dr. Collett (who sat by my side) and say, half in joke half in fun, "Now, dear sir, if you do not wish to subject yourself to an intellectual thrashing, you had better leave the platform." However, he heeded not my counsel, and in all probability profited by remaining, as Dr. Sexton, instead of taking advantage of a weak opponent and lashing him, simply dandled him on his knee and treated him with kindly advice and friendly counsel. Thus much in defence of Dr. Sexton. With respect to Dr. Collett's opinion of myself and my conduct in the chair, to me it is a matter of perfect indifference. I am getting old, and have had to bear the brunt of many a storm of opprobrium from those who have differed from me in opinion socially, politically, and otherwise, and have become obdurate in that matter.

Yours truly,

Northampton, June 7.

J. H. BLUNT.

On Sunday, May 7th, I delivered two discourses in Pullan's Music Hall, Bradford, to large audiences. My subject in the afternoon was "Spiritualism in Harmony with the Bible," and in the evening "The Five Senses." In this latter discourse I described the spiritual nature of man, the channels through which he obtains information of the material world, the spiritual senses, the nature of the spirit-world, and the eternal destiny of man regulated by his ruling love, as taught by Swedenborg. These two discourses gave great satisfaction, and many were the inquiries made as to when I should visit Bradford again. On the following Wednesday, the 10th, I gave a lecture, under the auspices of the British National Association of Spiritualists, in the Co-operative Hall, Heckmondwike, entitled, "Is Spiritualism calculated to benefit Mankind?"

From Heckmondwike I returned to London, and on Sunday, 14th, resumed my ministrations in connection with the "Church of the Lord," in the Cavendish Rooms. In the evening of that day I delivered a discourse on "Nature and Providence, with a view to meet some of the Sceptical Objections urged at the Present Day against the Divine Government in the Things of this world."

The "Great Debate," as it was called in advertisements and notices, between myself and Mr. Foote, having been announced for the 16th, 17th, 18th, and 19th, at Middlesborough, I left London on the first-named day, at half-past ten in the morning, reaching Middlesborough between four and five in the afternoon. The Rev. J. K. Bealey, the Vicar of the town, met me at the station, and conducted me to his house, where I stayed during the week. The subjects for discussion comprised the same two questions which were debated a month before at Newcastle with Mr. Watts, and the interest felt in the debate was almost, if not quite, equal in this latter case to what had been experienced in the former one. The Odd Fellows' Hall was secured for the

occasion, the largest public building in the town. Mr. Foote is well posted up in what is called the Secular philosophy, has written and spoken a great deal on the subject, has evidently a stronger leaning towards that form of Secularism advocated by Mr. G. J. Holyoake, than to the more reckless and dogmatic negations proclaimed by Mr. Bradlaugh, and he is, therefore, as competent to give a clear statement of what Secularism really is as any of its advocates. Nevertheless, as this same Secularism is nothing else, even on its most positive side, but a huge negation, it is impossible for any living man to make a satisfactory system out of such materials. In his opening speech, Mr. Foote made as clear a statement of the case as the subject admitted of, but as I told him in my reply, the whole thing was more a description of what Secularism was not than what it was. Indeed, it is impossible for any man to say exactly what it is, for all the leaders of the movement differ with regard to its fundamental principles. Excepting, therefore, what it has borrowed from other systems, it has within it nothing that can be made the basis of positive action. This I pointed out in my various speeches so clearly, that there were few persons in that large audience who did not show, by the enthusiasm with which they received what I had to say, that they thought I was right. True these were described in Mr. Foote's own paper afterwards as the "unthinking part of the audience," and my mode of attack as one that "tickled the fancy" of these people, which is particularly complimentary to about nine-tenths of those who were present. It is rather cool of Secularists to assume that they are paragons of wisdom, and that all thought must die with them. It was, however, because I pointed out, and proved beyond dispute, that, as a rule, they were so destitute of wisdom, and so incapable of thinking, that I provoked so much animosity on their part in the debate under consideration. My mode of attack displeased them greatly. The writer before named in Mr. Foote's paper having observed that the unthinking part of my admirers "clapped their hands and cheered" me "to the echo," remarks:—

The mode of his warfare was a novel one. Instead of showing that the principles of Secularism as laid down by Mr. Foote were not as he had stated them to be, he read extracts from the works of Mr. Bradlaugh, Mr. Watts, Mr. Foote, Mrs. Besant, and various others, to show that Secularism was without those qualities that Mr. Foote contended it had.

Exactly so, and this, I maintain, was perfectly legitimate. What had I to do with some imaginary scheme which Mr. Foote had got up for the occasion, which he chose to designate Secularism, when it was in direct opposition to what was taught as Secularism in official documents of the National Secular

Society, and in the writings of the leading men of the movement. "Don't quote Mr. Bradlaugh," was the burden of Mr. Foote's song as it had been of Mr. Watts', at Newcastle, but I did quote Mr. Bradlaugh. I told the audience that I intended to do so, and I assure all Secularists who may read this that I most unquestionably shall do so in all discussions in which I may enter on the subject of Secularism. But I did more than this. I did reply in detail to the so-called principles of Secularism as laid down by Mr. Foote, despite the statement to the contrary put forth in his paper. I took the fundamental features of Secularism from Mr. Foote's own writings, and showed that where they had not been purloined from Christianity, they were negations, and nothing else. I pointed out that the statements made by Mr. Foote in his different publications were so contradictory, that it was impossible to reconcile them. Take the following as an example. He remarks in *Secularism Re-stated* :—

In Secularism reason is the sole guide. By it is tested every proposition submitted to the judgment, whether about natural or supernatural things.

And this nonsense about reason being the sole guide of man is repeated *ad nauseum* in Mr. Foote's pamphlet. What then is to be thought of the following extract from another *brochure* by the same gentleman, entitled *Secular Work and Organization*.

Logic, too, appeals only to the most superficial part of our natures, and is often more conspicuous and potent in keen narrow minds than in those which have marked epochs of human progress, and lifted nations into a sublimity of virtue and devotion. What the logician lamely hobbles after, the great imaginative mind intuitively seizes. Hence the profound truth of Blake's proverb, "What is now proved was once only imagined." No cause ever triumphed by virtue of the mere dry light of reason, unaided by the passion of principle and the devotion of love. In short, conduct, which Mr. Arnold quaintly describes as comprising three-fourths of life, is mainly determined by feeling, and must, therefore, be influenced by agencies which act upon our sympathies. The notion that human beings may be made virtuous and heroic by the most rigorous demonstration of abstract truth, is nothing better than a pedagogue's dream. The great faiths of the world have exercised sovereignty over untold millions, not by virtue of indisputable metaphysics, but by "engaging for the government of man's conduct, the mighty forces of love, reverence, gratitude, hope, pity, and awe."

In the light of this last extract, with the greater part of which I thoroughly agree, what becomes of all the twaddle about reason being the sole guide of man? On the second night I endeavoured to shew that Secularism was destitute of any ethical code, and therefore deficient as a moral guide, that its platform was the narrowest in existence, that its principles were unphilosophical and could not satisfy the intellect, and that in no case could it meet the wants of human nature, which propositions I maintain were not answered by Mr. Foote, simply because they were unanswerable. A very excellent

summary of the first two nights' debate appeared in the *Daily Exchange*, which I printed in the last issue of this Magazine.

On the third night I opened the debate by pointing out that the character of Christ was perfectly unique, and that there was no other man in the history of the past that could by any possibility be compared with Jesus, because the claims and pretensions which He put forward in regard to Himself were such as were never met with in connection with any other human being. I therefore demanded to know in what light we were to view Him, whether as an impostor a fanatic, or what He professed to be. I quoted the testimony of a long list of sceptics as to the marvellous perfection of His character and the astounding effects it had produced on the world at large. Christianity, too, I stated to be a great fact which had to be accounted for, and I elaborated the argument based upon this with a view of showing that there was no means of explaining the origin and history of the Christian religion, except upon the supposition that it had a supernatural power. Its influence on the world was exceptional, and its moral code so perfect as to eclipse everything else that had been written by the most illustrious philosophers and religious teachers. This line of argument seems to have taken Mr. Foote somewhat aback, as he stated evidently with some degree of surprise, that I had staked everything upon the person and character of Christ, whereas I ought to have dealt with miracles and other indications of the supernatural. He proceeded in his opening speech on the last night to deal with what he called the contradictions in the New Testament and the indications of weakness in the character of Christ. In reply to this, I pointed out to him that, supposing the discrepancies in the New Testament were as numerous as he had represented them to be, and the imperfections in the character of Christ such as he had stated, this would only serve to increase the difficulty of his position, since it would render still more unaccountable the fact of the marvellous influence of Christ, and His religion and the estimation in which He had been held by the greatest sceptics in all ages. The so-called contradictions, however, I speedily showed were no contradictions at all by going through them *seriatim*, and moreover as a rule had been copied by Mr. Foote, not from the New Testament, but from the works of sceptical authors, and as is usual in such cases considerably misrepresented the real facts of the case. Without wishing to say one word in disparagement of Mr. Foote as a disputant, since he is certainly an able reasoner and a gentlemanly opponent, I cannot help observing here what I said on the platform, that his ignorance of the New Testament was lamentable. He confounded the Syro-Phœnician

woman with the woman of Samaria, and said that Christ called her a dog. He declared that in the case of the conversion of St. Paul, the whole thing was imaginary, because they who were with the Apostle neither heard the voice nor saw the light, and as a climax of blundering said that Christ himself repudiated Divine authority by saying to His Disciples, "Call no man master, for one is your master *even my Father which is in Heaven*," which is certainly a marvellous perversion of the Lord's words, which are, "One is your master, even Christ." In Mr. Foote's own paper we are told that "Mr. Foote left an impression on the thinking portion of his hearers which will not soon be forgotten," with which I quite agree, only about the nature of the impression we should probably differ. On the whole the debate was evidently a great success, and as several friends resident in the town said to me after it was over, "Secularism has received a blow from which it will not soon recover." When I sat down at the close of my last speech, after the applause, which had been continued for a dozen or more distinct rounds, had subsided, great numbers waved their hats and handkerchiefs in token of the pleasure they experienced. There is one other fact which I must not omit to mention, since it serves to show what opinions the Secularists formed of the discussion better than anything that they may state in words. Early in the debate, Mr. Foote had introduced the subject very unnecessarily of the existence of God. I replied to this that the existence of God was not the subject of discussion, and that consequently I should not deal with it on that occasion, but that if Mr. Foote's friends would put him forward to debate that very important question at some other time, I should be delighted to meet him, but as a rule I found Secularists rather shy of dealing with that topic. Mr. Foote, in his next speech, stated, though it was thought by some present not very clearly, that he was agreeable to meet me to discuss the existence of God. The result of this was that on the last evening after the debate was really over, the Chairman drew attention to the circumstance, and said that he hoped the two committees would retire into the ante-room to arrange for this other discussion, before the disputant left. This request was received with uproarious applause, as had also been my throwing out of the challenge, showing that the audience were anxious to have the new debate brought about as soon as possible. My committee met in the ante-room with a view to complete the arrangements, and a few minutes after Mr. Meir, the Secretary of the Secular Society, and the leading member of Mr. Foote's committee, entered and said, "Gentlemen, we decline to have any more discussions just at present;" when a friend standing

by my elbow good-humouredly remarked, "I think you are wise; you show your prudence."

On the following day, Saturday, I returned to London, to be in time for my Sunday duties. I should have stayed at Middlesborough, and preached two sermons in the "New Jerusalem Church," as, in fact, the friends there had quite expected I would, but I had been previously advertised to deliver a discourse in connection with the "Church of the Lord," in London, on the "Efficacy of Prayer and its Relation to Modern Thought." I felt, therefore, compelled to return home and deliver this discourse, which I did, and I may here add that it was not only well received, but many persons expressed a hope that they might soon be able to obtain it in print. On this same Sunday evening, too, I had been announced, without being consulted on the subject, to deliver a discourse in the George Street Hall, Euston Road, in connection with the Christian Evidence Society, on my "Experiences of Secularism." Now, as I could not very well be in two places at the same time, I was compelled, as a sort of compromise, with a view to keeping faith with the public in both places, to hasten away to deliver this discourse, after my own service was over. I reached the Hall in George Street, accompanied by several members of my own congregation, at about nine o'clock, and proceeded at once to give the lecture. It was listened to with very great attention, although almost all present were Secularists. At its close, Mr. Turpin, the Chairman, announced that there would be an opportunity allowed for discussion, when up rose a coarse and vulgar person named Haslam, who has been referred to before in these Notes, and proceeded to use his utmost endeavours to insult me, by saying that he could tell them why I had turned Christian, it was to get more money. I resented this scandalous and slanderous falsehood, by immediately putting on my hat and coat, and leaving the room. Of course a great deal of confusion was the result, and the meeting was broken up. The Secularists know perfectly well that my change of opinion, so far from bringing me additional wealth, has entailed on me innumerable losses, increased labour, smaller income, and anxieties which, I doubt, if I could bear without faith in Providence and the consolation of religion. And yet they go on repeating these mendacious calumnies. Well, it shows what their principles are worth.

On Saturday, the 27th, I made my way to Keighley, in Yorkshire, where I had been announced to deliver two discourses on the following day (Sunday). One of these was given under the auspices of the British National Association of Spiritualists, and the other according to my usual arrangements with local societies.

The large lecture-room of the new Mechanics' Institute was secured for the occasion, and each of the audiences numbered between five and six hundred people. My subjects were, in the afternoon, "The Claims of Spiritualism upon Public Attention," and in the evening, "Objections to Spiritualism Stated and Examined." During the evening service I was so very unwell that it was with difficulty that I got through my discourse, and when it was over I found myself quite incapable of standing up while the last hymn was being sung. I stayed whilst in this town with Mr. McLaren, son of the Member of Parliament for Edinburgh, who has my thanks for his hospitality and kindness. The following report appeared in the *Keighley News* of June 3rd, which, as it contains an excellent summary of the two discourses, I reprint:—

Dr. Sexton on Spiritualism.—On Sunday last the Spiritualists of Keighley held two public services in the large hall of the Mechanics' Institute. The audiences were large on each occasion, the hall being about three-parts full. Mr. Harrison Roberts, of Oxenhope, presided. Discourses were delivered by Dr. Sexton, who formerly held a prominent place among the more philosophic Secularists. In the afternoon, the claims which modern Spiritualism has upon public attention were urged. He contended that the phenomena which were manifested could not be accounted for by the action of any natural force of which scientific men had any knowledge. The theory of the spiritual character of these phenomena was based, as all other science was, on the Baconian system of induction—by arranging and classifying the facts, and then inventing a theory which would cover all the facts. He urged the claims of Spiritualism on its scientific character as professing to have discovered a new force which might go far to clear up natural phenomena; on its philosophic value as opposed to the materialism of the present day; on its professing to place beyond the shadow of a doubt the immortality of man; and casting some light upon the relation of spirit to matter.—In the evening the objections to Spiritualism were stated and answered. He contended that the theory of the spiritual origin of the phenomena was no more extravagant than that of the system of astronomy now accepted; nor than the theory that light, heat, and electricity were only modes of motion or forms of force, exhibited by the movement of an ether, a subtle fluid which was not cognisable by any of the senses. He contended that the facts of Spiritualism were much more easily ascertainable by the masses than the facts of science in general and denied that the genuine phenomena of Spiritualism could be more than roughly imitated by the cleverest conjurors, and could not be even attempted when subjected to strict tests. He admitted that a great many of the manifestations were of an utterly worthless character, and accounted for this on the ground that a low class of spirits would find a low class of mediums. He deprecated dark *séances* because they afforded an opportunity for trickery; and because darkness was not favourable to the higher class of manifestations. In the last place, he met the argument that Spiritualism was opposed to religion by saying that it was no doubt opposed to certain views of religion; but then the fact proved that spirits could communicate with man. The lectures were full of close argument, abounded in scientific illustrations, and were listened to with the greatest attention.

A very good and somewhat more extended report of the discourses appeared in the *Keighley Herald* of the same date.

On the Sunday that I was absent at Keighley, my place was supplied at Cavendish Rooms by Mr. W. Barnard, who, as I am told by those who listened to him, delivered a very able discourse

on the following important topic—"The Religion of Jesus Christ, not Sceptical Speculations, the True Philosophy." Mr. Barnard's method of treating this question gave great satisfaction to all who were present, but seems to have raised the ire of the editor of the *Medium*, for appended to a brief report of the service in that journal is the following very ill-natured editorial comment:—

Had there not been such an array of sectarian apologists as Mr. Barnard and his *ilk* speculative philosophy would at all times have been the firm support of spiritual illumination, as it has been indeed—the misrepresentations of the Cavendish Rooms party notwithstanding. Jesus Christ "laid down" no system other than that common to all spiritual teachings, and if the Cavendish Rooms people are not better informed on the matter, they had better go to school and know what they are talking about before they attempt to teach Spiritualists. It may be all very well for those who attend Cavendish Rooms, but our readers demand the truth, not perversely-twisted falsehoods, which deny the universality of spiritual revelation, and hence present the most insidious form of infidelity. The enemies of spiritual enlightenment have always aimed at fixing the Divine plan on one solitary prop, that thereby it might be the more easily kicked over. Hence the materialism that such people affect to deplore.

What does this pugnacious editor want? Surely if he be allowed to do his own work in his own way he might leave other people to do the same. As to Sectarianism, there is a great deal more of it in the school of Burns than anywhere else in the Spiritual movement. The editor of the *Medium* hurls abroad his anathemas like a pigmy pope, and the Spiritual Institute seems to vie with the Vatican in the mode in which it sends forth its fulminations against all who dare to doubt its authority. What is the great offence of which the people here described as "The Cavendish Rooms party" are guilty? They pursue their course unobtrusively, teaching what they believe to be the truth in a spirit of love. They make no attacks on Mr. Burns or his party; indeed, Spiritualism in any form is seldom even so much as mentioned in their meetings. They accept Jesus Christ not as a great Reformer or a Medium, because they believe that such a position is utterly out of harmony with His real character, and altogether opposed to His teaching concerning Himself, but as the Supreme Arbiter of mankind, the Lord of men's consciences, the object of human worship, the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father (John i. 18), the Way, the Truth, and the Life (xiv. 6), the brightness of God's glory and the express image of His person (Hebrews i. 3), and the Alpha and Omega, which is and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty (Rev. i. 8). They do not, however, condemn others who think differently, and therefore certainly betray no Sectarianism in their teachings. Of what "misrepresentations" are they guilty? Assuredly not of the Scriptures, while passages like those just quoted abound. I rather think that the "misre-

presentations" will be found on the other side. The statement that "Jesus Christ laid down no system other than that common to all Spiritual teachings," is a palpable misrepresentation, and betrays a most lamentable ignorance of the New Testament. What spirit, either in the flesh or out of it, has ever declared that rest only was to be obtained by coming to it (Matt. xi. 28), that eternal life was its special prerogative to give (John x. 28), that it was the Bread of Life (vi. 35), the one good Shepherd (x. 14), the door by entering in at which men are to be saved (9,) the sole approach to the invisible God (xiv. 6), the Resurrection and the Life (xi. 25), and to be honoured as God is honoured (v. 23)? What would the most progressive Spiritualist say of any spirit who should come to-day, arrogating to itself such powers as these? There would, I venture to remark, be no two opinions about the matter, all would agree that it was a lying spirit, whose object was to deceive. Yet Jesus Christ used all these expressions, and many more such of Himself, and for eighteen hundred years these tremendous assumptions have been preached to a world, that, to quote the words of an eminent author, is "unusually quick to lay hold of conceit to unmask it, and to bring down the egotistic airs of impudent pretenders," and not even sceptics have observed any incongruity in the so-doing. The editor of the *Medium* tells us that his "readers demand the truth, not perversely-twisted falsehoods." It is a pity then that he does not take more pains to supply them with that same truth rather than fill up his pages with abuse of all persons who do not see eye to eye with him. The very mention of Christianity seems to act upon Mr. Burns like a red rag upon a bull. It drives him into a state of frenzy, in which he runs amuck against every person he meets. That same Christianity, however, is not only not the enemy of "spiritual enlightenment," but is a far greater friend of all true Spiritualism than any of the so-called progressive crotchets that emanate from the "Spiritual Institute;" and it will live to shed its blessings on society long after all Mr. Burns' pet theories have passed into that oblivion where so much of the rubbish of the past is entombed.

A leading member of my congregation, who was very indignant at the gratuitous attack thus made upon us in the *Medium*, addressed the following letter to the editor of that journal, which, however, was not inserted. Comment upon its exclusion is unnecessary:—

To the Editor of the "Medium."

SIR,—In the name of common justice, I claim the right to the gratuitous and unprovoked attack in your last issue upon a "party," of whom I rejoice to acknowledge myself one. In the outset, I ask how it is that in the very article

in which you complainingly refer to "an array of sectarian apologists," &c., the historical untruthfulness of which, as it appears to me, is marked only by its virulence and audacity—the essential spirit, and tone, of bigoted sectarianism, should be so conspicuous? The animus of the article is, indeed, so unmistakable, that one might venture to leave it to the inevitable spontaneous evaporation in which it would most likely do its own suicidal work.

I demand, however, to know what "misrepresentations" we, of the Cavendish Rooms, have been guilty of, that we should be charged in this stab-in-the-dark fashion? On which side, I demand, fairly lies the charge of "perversely twisted falsehoods?" You say, "but our readers demand the truth." Exactly, I am one of your regular readers, and, as you say, I demand the truth," for a very high authority assures us that no lie is of the truth. I am willing to learn, and am not above "going to school" for the purpose; but I am forced to admit that there is more elevating teaching to be had than your pages afford. There is much to learn in the School of Jesus; but so far as my experience goes, there is very little that is worth having in the School of Burns "and his ilk"—remember, these words are yours.

Of course you are at liberty to object to others entertaining a more exalted opinion of the character and claims of the Lord Jesus than you do. But why should it awaken a spirit of rancour and abuse? Surely no harm is done you hereby. Is it that you cannot tolerate their assigning to Him a higher position than you "and your ilk"—I find it convenient again to use your words—who are wont to speak of Him with a kind of patronising air, as "the gentle Nazarene," the "great Medium," &c., all which is simply contemptible to those who *reasonably* regard "His name as above every name, and that at His name every knee shall bow?"

It is true that such lessons are not to be learned in your "school," but then they are so satisfying, that we have no disposition to unlearn them. And while rejoicing in "the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world," we leave you to whatever of Spiritual enlightenment your lesser lights can afford you, only wishing, if possible, that you may profit thereby. You may "lay the flattering unction to your soul," that your readers desire the truth as it is in Burns; be it so, but we prefer "the truth as it is in Jesus."

Great Percy St., June 5, 1876.

E. FORD.

During the past three Sundays I have given, at the Cavendish Rooms—by special request—a series of Discourses on the "Fallacies of Secularism." It will be seen, from a notice in another part of the Magazine, that these are in the Press, and will be issued almost immediately in a small volume.

GEO. SEXTON.

London, June 20th, 1876.

PASSING AWAY OF MR. JAMES EADIE.—We have to announce, and we do it with considerable grief, the passing away from earth to the Father's everlasting home, of Mr. James Eadie, of Glasgow, on the 19th ult. Mr. Eadie was a sincere New Churchman, and a firm believer in Christian Spiritualism. He was a kind, warm-hearted, amiable man, his soul full of love for his fellow men, and his main aim in life to do his duty. He had reached the ripe age of 77 when he passed away. May the Lord raise up more like him in our midst. Such men are the salt of the earth.

RELIGION ESSENTIAL TO HUMANITY.—OUTLINE OF A SERMON.*

BY GEORGE SEXTON, LL.D.

Luke x. 42.—"One thing is needful."

SEMI-RATIONALISTIC commentators have been very busy with this text. It has nothing to do with religion, they say, but refers entirely to temporal things. Our Lord's purpose, they maintain, was to rebuke the anxiety of Martha to furnish Him with a varied repast. He therefore informs her that He did not desire splendour and profusion, and that consequently Mary showed a better appreciation of his character by sitting at his feet and listening to his instructions. Every plain and simple reader of the New Testament, however, will see that the one thing needful has a reference to religion, and that the better part which Mary had chosen was an eternal one, which could not be taken from her. So I shall treat it, and shall consider, therefore.

I. The thing here referred to as being needful.

II. Why, it is called the one thing needful, as though it were the only one.

III. The sense in which religion is essential to humanity.

I. THE THING HERE REFERRED TO AS BEING NEEDFUL.—

Few persons who have studied the teachings of Christ with a spirit of piety and reverence will dispute that this refers to religion. Jesus invariably puts the things which relate to the soul in the first rank, and attaches to them an importance which belongs to nothing else. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" "One thing thou lackest," &c. The peculiarity in the teaching of the Lord was that He was both the Revealer and the Revelation. He was the Word of God. His business on earth was to reveal God to mankind. Hence the sum total of His teaching was to show men not only what religion was, but how they might become partakers of it and realize its power.

What, then, is religion? This is a very large question, and one which has been the source of endless controversies. Yet, after all, probably the answer to it may be compressed into a very small compass. We have it in the two great commandments of the Lord. Love to God supremely, and love to man as an outcome of the love to God. If a man does not love his brother, neither does he love God. The word religion is derived from two Latin words, which mean to bind again;

Preached in the Free Christian Church, Swindon, on Sunday, June 25th, 1876.

and, therefore, signifies the re-binding man to God, from whom he has broken loose. This binding is by cords of love. The purpose of religion is twofold. First, that men should be good ; second, that they should give God the glory for their goodness. All religious systems that fail in this are deficient in the essential feature of true religion. Nor is this rule established by an arbitrary arrangement on the part of God, but flows by an irresistible necessity from the constitution of His nature and our own. It is the essence of love to wish to give something of its own to another. God is Love, Perfect Love, Infinite Love. Therefore, it is His desire to give of Himself to man. From this Divine desire man was created at first that he might receive the Divine Love, appropriate it to himself, and live by it as of himself. This Love is the love of goodness, and, therefore, in proportion as a man loves goodness, does he answer the purpose for which he was created. The primary purpose of religion is to make man good. Selfishness is the opposite of good. Now, to attribute to self that which comes from God is both selfish and unjust. The second purpose of religion, therefore, is to make man acknowledge that he owes all his goodness to God. If the ancient religions are examined in the light of this grand truth, it will be seen how utterly deficient they are, and how, while they vaguely point the way to the glorious consummation which was to come, they themselves fall far short of the true ideal. This principle will also form a test to which we can bring the various Christian sects, with a view to ascertain how far they are in accordance with the true religion.

II. WHY IT IS CALLED THE ONE THING NEEDFUL, AS THOUGH IT WERE THE ONLY ONE.—Clearly in the expression the *one* thing there must be deep meaning. Many things, therefore, are not needful. The question has frequently been discussed, and it is one about which great difference of opinion prevails as to what are necessities of life. The thing here referred to is not *a* necessity of life, but *the* necessity. It is that which stands before all else in existence. The question that arises, however, is why is religion the one thing needful.

1. *It is the Principal Thing in Life.*—There is nothing else of half so much importance; religion is man's chief concern. It has to do with his eternal welfare. The very life of the soul depends upon it. As spiritual things precede temporal things, so religion must precede all else which belongs to the human mind.

2. *It influences all the Rest.*—Everything in life takes its colouring from religion. Having to do with the spirit, it is largely a cause of which much else in life must be viewed as the effect. It influences largely the *a* thoughts, *b* the words, *c* the actions.

III. THE SENSE IN WHICH RELIGION IS ESSENTIAL TO HUMANITY.—At one time, perhaps, this question might have been considered superfluous, but it is clearly not so at the present time. Doubt first arose respecting the rationality of religious doctrines, then their authority was questioned, now their effects are discussed. The question, therefore, in what sense religion is needful to humanity is a very important one.

1. *Religion is a Need of Man's Spiritual Nature.*—We have spiritual capacities that must be cultivated. The spiritual nature of man requires food, just as certainly as does his material frame. This food is only to be found in religion, because only by religion can both sides of the spiritual nature be satisfied. Truth satisfies the reason, but not the affections. They must be influenced by love. The religious nature of man will sicken if not fed on spiritual things. All systems are false which do not recognise this fact. Man is essentially a religious being. In all ages and at all times religions have existed. And these, although frequently mixed with error, were all based upon great truths. Everywhere the human soul has aspired after God as its Father, and Heaven as its home. Atheism never did, and never can become general, because it contradicts man's noblest instincts. The most degrading religious systems will always be preferred before Atheism, because man has a religious nature.

2. *Religion is necessary for a Basis of Morals, and therefore for the Proper Government of Society.*—There is no true ethical code to be discovered outside of religion. In modern times there appears to be a tendency to accept for a moral guide the so-called Utilitarianism of Bentham, elaborated by J. Stuart Mill, which proclaims the greatest happiness of the greatest number, and judges of the morality of an act by its tendency to promote this end. This principle is absurd, because it tests the morality of an act by its results, which cannot be seen until after the act has been performed. Nor are the other human guides in morals more satisfactory. They cannot lead one into the path where virtue, peace, and honour lie, for they know it not. Religion which the Infinite Father sent down from Heaven can alone meet the moral state of man. Study the pages of human philosophy until you become bewildered in its mazes, and see what you can learn on this question. There is much tall talk about principle and honour, but the moral laws are vague and most unsatisfactory. Man is sinful; that fact must not be overlooked. The question is, how is he to be raised out of himself. No philosophy can accomplish this. It can be done by religion and by it alone.

3. *Religion is necessary to Human Happiness.*—This is a bold

assertion, but it is nevertheless true. There is no basis for happiness if you take away God. Wealth, power, fame, and all else that pertain to earth may pass away ; and even where they do not, there is the fear that they may. Sorrow comes to all. How is it to be borne? To teach this lesson was the great aim of ancient philosophy. It was most nearly accomplished in Stoicism ; but how miserable and poor is Stoicism when compared with Christianity. In order to understand clearly the effect of Christ's religion on the mind, witness its operation in trouble, affliction, poverty, persecution, &c. There is always hope where there is faith in God. Without God there is no ground for hope. Pessimism may be true and evil eternal. In human life religion shines like the sun, shedding its glory around, and dispelling the darkest of clouds. Then in death, what avails all else. Here is an enemy which neither science nor philosophy can grapple with ; but even *he* has been conquered by Christ. "Come," said Addison, "and see how a Christian can die."

4. *Religion is indispensable as a Preparation for the Hereafter.*—The future life is frequently denied nowadays, but it is a fact nevertheless. Each one must reap in the future what he has sown in the present. This fact is involved in the nature of things. There can be no preparation for the future life but by the aid of religion. We hear men talk about taking a leap in the dark, but assuredly this is not wise. The future life has been revealed, and this much respecting it, is certain that our condition there will be what we make it by our conduct here. The importance of religion, then, is beyond all dispute. It is the best both for this world and for that which is to come. Christ's religion is very simple, and yet all-sufficient.

Live while you live, the epicure would say,
And seize the pleasure of the present day ;
Live while you live, the sacred preacher cries,
And give to God each moment as it flies.
Lord, in my view let both united be !
I live in pleasure while I live in Thee.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

MEYERBEER HALL, LIVERPOOL.

PURSUANT to announcement in the different journals connected with the Science and Religion of Spiritualism, the above elegant and commodious temple was duly inaugurated on Whit Sunday last, the 4th ult. Proceedings began at ten o'clock in the morning with music, singing, conversation, and fraternal greetings. At three in the afternoon, Dr. William Hitchman, President of the Psychological Society, delivered

the introductory lecture, which took the form of a reply to "The Courses of Religious Thought, by the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, M.P.," in the current number of the *Contemporary Review*. The audience was large, intelligent, and respectable, and listened with rapt attention to a critical analysis of the Gladstonian Theology, its light and darkness, and warmly approved the Doctor's conclusion, that "Spiritualism, with all its vulgarity, ignorance, nonsense, and imposture, had an immovable basis in the laws of God, spiritual and natural, and that in its *diviner* principles and practice the veil of the unseen universe was devoutly lifted as a solace for the soul, and a foretaste of heaven." The platform—which is really a magnificent dramatic stage—and library table, were tastefully decorated with paintings, spirit photographs, flowers, and superb furniture, upholstered in Utrecht velvet, with every comfort and convenience that forethought could provide for the visitors, gratify a love of the fine arts, and refined taste for the curiosities of spiritual or material nature. The evening oration was given by Mrs. Nosworthy, who detailed in choice and eloquent language her "Experiences of Spiritualism," and quoted various specimens of Mrs. Tappan's inspirational discourses, especially one of her latest, under the control of Judge Edmonds, since her return to America. Expressing thoughts for the times—original and select—with rhetorical beauty and graceful elocution, it need hardly be said that the many literary and scientific men, as well as artists and merchants, who crowded the institution to its utmost capacity, were more than satisfied. Mr. John Priest was the effective Chairman, and added much to the general success by his able and polished speeches, as did those numerous ladies and gentlemen who favoured the company with delightful vocal and instrumental music. ESTO PERPETUA.

SECULAR PROGRESS AND ITS RELATION TO GUM.

The Secularists have been holding a Conference at Leeds at which there was the usual display of rancour, ill-feeling, and bitterness towards each other. The President—Mr. Bradlaugh, of course—ruled every person out of order who had a word to say against his authority, and played the despot in his small way to the top of his bent. Occasionally the meeting became very lively in the wrangling that went on. One speaker in his extreme independence, and antagonism to the leading authorities present, informed the meeting that he would not take the advice of anybody, "he would not take it from God Almighty," which declaration seems to have provoked a good deal of laughter, the speaker having evidently forgotten for the

moment that he was an Atheist addressing an assembly of disbelievers in "God Almighty." Much bunkum was talked about the progress of the "principles," which it was said even Bishops, Legislators, and the President of the Wesleyan Conference had admitted and lamented, which latter fact, however—if it be a fact—only shows how ignorant the said Bishops, Legislators, &c., are of the true state of affairs, and how much they overrate the gigantic sham yclept Secularism. The balance sheet, it appears, did not bear out the boasting about progress. Of course it has not been published, and the reason may be gathered from a statement made in one of the speeches of Mr. Foote, who is the leader of a small opposition to the President and the editor of a rival paper. He said, speaking of this same mighty organisation, the increase of which had been referred to in such glowing terms, that its income was "so ridiculously trifling, that the President almost abjectly implored them not to publish the balance sheet, lest the Christians should make it their laughing stock." Anent this same balance sheet there is one item in it which is rather funny. It seems that nearly all the income of the Society during the past year has been expended in gum, which certainly has not had the effect of making the members stick together. A very humorous article on the conference and its doings appears in the *Secularist*, from which we extract a passage, bearing on this same question of gum:—

Next came the balance sheet, and here I noted the wonderful power of attention to detail for which all other great generals have been famous, even to the cost of the gum used for sticking together the sheets of the petition against Royal grants being given, namely between £2 and £3. In his playful way, the Inimitable said this seemed absurd; but, of course, it was not, because the gum must be in proportion to the number of sheets, and when said petition swallowed up nearly all the annual subscriptions of the society, it ought to be a big thing. When I attended night-school, I was considered tolerably smart at summing, and I at once set to work to figure it out. It could only be done by algebra, and the equation took this form: $\frac{g}{e} + 600 pr \times d = x$, in which g represents the strength of the gum, e , the economy for which Charles Bradlaugh is famous, p , the pressure put upon Secular societies to sign the petition, r , the rate at which the signatures were obtained, and d , the delay in presenting it. Assuming that twelve penny bottles of gum can be bought for a shilling, and that the velocity of its disappearance, according to the well-known law, is in inverse ratio to the bearing of the petition on the square root of the matter in hand, I find the length of the petition is exactly 15,467 miles, 3 furlongs, 7 yards, and half an inch; and though the calculation was made hurriedly, I guess it is not far out, because a blind man can see that unless it was somewhere about that length, it could not be of any service to the Secular cause. However, as Mr. Bradlaugh is a smart man of business, I reckon next time he runs a petition he will put the gumming out by contract.

We would suggest that in future the "National Secular Society" should be called the Society for promoting the Use of Gum, since this seems to be the most positive kind of work in which it finds itself engaged.

CONJURORS AND MEDIUMS.

A newly-started weekly, with a Christian name, and one which should imply that its object was to promote harmony and concord amongst Christians, had a week or two since an article on certain conjurors, whose entertainment is professedly an exposure of Spiritualism, from which we extract the following:—

The decay of faith in "spirit-rapping," and even in *clairvoyance* as more at best than a feeble scintillation of spirit, is manifest to all, but it has probably not occurred yet to more than a few how much this result may be attributable to the very curious demonstrations, twice a day in the season, over several years, in Piccadilly, and which continue to hold their place with undiminished popularity Mr. Maskelyne has applied himself with rare ingenuity to what he modestly calls "an exposure of the fallacies of spirit-rapping;" but we do not know that the astute artist himself is as fully aware as his audiences of the extremely original character of his method of exposure. He turns the *spiritual séance* out of doors by greatly exceeding all its wonderful phenomena, and disillusionizes a delusion by producing an illusion much more perfect than the delusion to be disillusionized. Not only are all the highest performances of "the spirits" reproduced in a more finished style, but others, of a more exquisite and really interesting character than the most distinguished *media* have hitherto approached are executed with the utmost ease, and with a puzzle to the spectator all the more fascinating because it is well known to be a puzzle and no more. There is something analogous to all this in chemistry, where the stronger agent subdues, transforms, or expels the weaker; or in painting, by the force of contrast; or in logic, where the *quam magis* has always great power. But the simplicity with which Mr. Maskelyne and his coadjutor, Mr. Cooke, go about their wonder-working, as if they were doing no more than exposing a humbug all the time, renders the entertainment infinitely droll.

Now we should like to ask this sapient scribe whether he has ever attended a spiritual *séance* in his life, because if he has, he knows perfectly well that there is not the slightest resemblance between what these conjurors do with their clumsy machinery and what is done by mediums without any apparatus whatever. If, as is more than probable, he has not attended a *séance*, and is, therefore, entirely ignorant of what Spiritualism is, how does he reconcile it to his conscience to write in this strain about subjects of which he knows nothing. In any case his untruthfulness is apparent to all persons who have examined the question. The statement that these jugglers exceed in their tricks—tricks which can be easily explained by any person who understands the merest rudiments of mechanical science—the marvellous phenomena of Spiritualism, which have been deemed inexplicable by some of the most eminent scientific men living, is about on a par with the reckless assertion that there is any "decay of faith in spirit-rapping." We are prepared for this kind of thing from papers, whose only object is to get advertisements, and pander to the ignorance of the public, but we really did expect more truthfulness and honesty from the publication in question.

Correspondence.

"THE EDITOR'S LABOURS."

To the Editor of the "Spiritual Magazine."

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have just been reading, with painfully renewed interest, Dr. Munro's letter, in your current number, entitled "The Editor's Labours;" and, although it has been my privilege to be a very near and intimate friend of yours for years past, I want you to consider this letter as addressed to you, not alone as friend to friend, but to you *in your capacity of Editor of the Spiritual Magazine*, and one who has claims upon the Spiritualists which it is high time should be recognized in some more practical form than that of mere word sympathy. From the well-known intimacy between us, I have all along felt considerable delicacy in speaking a *public* word on the subject; but now that Dr. Munro has broken the ice, I have the less hesitation, especially as I am able to endorse to the full all he has said, and to make my appeal with a strength derived from special and detailed knowledge. You have always made me the confidant of the trials and difficulties which have beset your path as an exponent of Spiritualism, and a public worker in that field of labour; and I know—as, I believe, no one else knows—how constant and heavy and all but unbearable have been the pecuniary burdens you have been called upon to sustain—from no fault of your own, but because you would be faithful to the new light which God had been pleased to give you upon the immortal life. Of course, with you as a private individual, earning your bread by literary labour, the public can have no special concern; but, as you have been made to bear such heavy money losses through Spiritualism, it is only fair that Spiritualists should know the fact, and become sensible of your claims upon them in consequence of the help you have afforded them. Not only have you lost troops of friends, and regular and valuable sources of income by becoming a Spiritualist; but you have raised up countless and unrelenting enemies, who have tried by every means in their power to blast your reputation, rob you of your peace of mind, and ruin your prospects in life; and, if they have not succeeded in compassing all their ends, or in doing so entirely, the fault has not been theirs. They have precipitated the present state of affairs; so that, unless you have tolerably large and prompt help afforded you, neither you nor I can answer for the consequences. Now, all this to outsiders, who are ignorant of the facts, may seem very much like "tall talk," and a sensational way of dealing with a common case. You and I know, however, that my words are those of sad truth and soberness, while the Spiritualistic public ought by this time to know that yours is *not* "a common," but a very *uncommon* "case," because it is the case of one who, but for his devotion to Spiritualism, would never have been in his present condition; and who, if Spiritualists do their duty to any extent, will be lifted out of it at once, by a measure of help adequate to the exigencies of the case.

Kindly pardon my reminding you, for the sake of saying as much in this indirect way to your readers, that I have, from time to time done, what was possible to ease the burden resting on your shoulders; while I may add that I am now trying to collect moneys for you, from private friends; and if any who may see these words should be willing to co-operate with me, I should feel extremely obliged if they would make their remittances to me as soon as possible, and I will take care that they shall pass on to you as quickly as they can in the nature of things.

As long as you are permitted to bear what you are now bearing, you will be suffering a cruel injustice, and I have no right to believe that the Spiritualists, when once they are informed of the facts by one who knows them so perfectly as I do, will allow that injustice any longer to exist. The old and very familiar adage that "Many can help one when one cannot help many," should, I think, be practically proved in your case. You are suffering at this very time, in

health, from constant and unusually severe labour in the field of Spiritualism, and, when the body as well as the pocket is made to suffer, the combination is unusually painful. Most sincerely do I hope, my dear friend, that these words may have their desired effect, and that the appeal I now make may find a response sufficiently liberal to ease your mind by easing your circumstances, and thus give you fresh heart and strength to do a work which no one in England can do so well.

Yours affectionately,

Rose Cottage, Swindon,
10th June, 1876.

FREDERIC ROWLAND YOUNG.

[We have received a good many communications on this subject, most of them containing kind expressions of sympathy and promises of assistance. We publish Mr. Young's letter in preference to any others—although such well-known and influential Spiritualists as Mr. William Howitt, Mr. D. D. Home, Mr. Alexander Tod and others are amongst the writers—because he has personal knowledge of all the facts of the case. He is intimately acquainted with our position—what we have suffered, and the great sacrifices we have made, and can therefore speak from his own experience on the subject. The *Leicester Chronicle*, in an able notice of the *Spiritual Magazine*, refers to this matter as follows:—"In storming this fortress [Materialism] Dr. Sexton leads the 'Forlorn Hope,' and has many admirers. It would be well if every admirer were a friend; in which case his labours would be adequately rewarded. At present, however, people will enthusiastically applaud the champion of Spiritualism, but leave him without the solid encouragement which is his due, and which it is discreditable in them to withhold from him any longer. It is time the Doctor's friends earnestly bestirred themselves to do him justice."—ED. S. M.]

SURELY ENOUGH ABOUT HAFED.

To the Editor of the "Spiritual Magazine."

DEAR SIR,—The editor of the *Christian News* seems to have constituted himself the champion of the wretched un-Christian book *Hafed*, which as it goes to base Christianity directly on Paganism in defiance of the collective evidence of both the Old and New Testament, that Christianity had not been, could not be, and was not in any degree derived from any but a directly Divine source, is an odd crusade for a Christian journal. I have given the Scripture proofs of this conspicuous fact in abundance, any one single instance of which is sufficient to satisfy any one capable of comprehending the spirit and genius of the Christian system. The great boggle of the *Christian News* is incarnation. That Jesus Christ in assuming flesh became in His humanity "like unto us in all things," is a fact broadly asserted in the Gospels; that He, therefore, partook of our physical necessities is a direct consequence, and that He, of course, had need of food and drink, whether at the well of Samaria, or anywhere else, is palpable enough; but what has that to do with question of the in-dwelling Divinity? One side of this combined nature is perfectly reconcilable with the other.

The editor of the *Christian News* asks me whether I imagine that "the babe in the manger at Bethlehem had consciousness of the knowledge of all that existed in the universe?" I may ask him in return whether he believes in the incarnation of the Deity in the body of Christ? If he do, then *he* is bound to explain it, if explanation be necessary; if he do not believe this, he denies the whole revelation of both Old and New Testament as to the manifestation of Christ in the flesh, and cannot lay much claim to the title of a Christian, much less to demand explanation of this mystery from a Christian. That Christ, who had existed with the Father before the world was, did enter into a mortal body, and in it perform His earthly ministry, is declared positively by Himself. "Lo, I come," speaking both through the prophetic Psalmist and the Apostle, "to do Thy will, O Lord." Adding, "a body hast Thou prepared me." And the Apostle declared, that not only was "God in Christ

reconciling the world unto Himself," but that "in Christ dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

This being the great Scriptural truth, it is of little consequence to us, who, so far from comprehending the modes of the Divine existence, do not even comprehend our own, whether I or any one can explain the *how*, or whether the babe in the manger was possessed of omniscience. The eternal Spirit of Christ, as it existed in a carnate condition, at that or any other moment, existed as fully and perfectly as under any other condition. Does this so-called Christian editor suppose that God, whether in the flesh or out of it, can be cooped up, imprisoned, rendered partly or wholly unconscious; can be cut off from His own infinite attributes and powers, in fact, from Himself?

If the editor wishes to know something of the relative natures of matter and spirit, let him consult the Spiritualist, towards whom he seems to have a leaning, and he will learn that spirits, far below the grade of divinity, treat matter as nothing; pass through it; assume it; throw it off, and disperse it at will. If they can do this, can the Author of matter, spirit, and creation, find any difficulty in living in and through matter, whether in the shape of a babe, a philosopher, or an archangel? The babe in the manger, therefore, was permeated especially by that Divinity whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, in a mode, no doubt, full of wonder and mystery to the acutest psychologist, but perfectly simple to the Author of all things. Without troubling ourselves, therefore, as to the inexplicable *how* a Divine being can descend from a celestially-developed status into a human body, and occupying it in all stages, from its birth to its exit, we may and must believe, that when the body of Christ was fully developed, and became the all-sufficient vehicle of His divine power and spiritual agency, He possessed the consciousness of all knowledge in the universe. If God dwelt in Him bodily, He must do this; and if the editor in question cannot get this broadly-asserted fact into his head, it would be of little benefit to discuss with him the higher mysteries of the Christian faith. Therefore, though the said editor says that he has other questions to put to me, I can save him the trouble, by informing him that I have no intention of answering him. I am not disposed to subject myself to the interrogatories of any editor, or self-constituted judge, especially of one who cannot comprehend the most broadly-written of all the Christian truths, namely, that the religion of Christ is no *omnium gatherum* of Paganism, but is the religion of the Father, directly communicated from on high. That Hafed is a production in full and direct opposition to the whole spirit, promulgation, and ordinances of Christianity, needs no repetition. My protest stands built on the great and luminous truths of the Gospel, and must stand or fall with them.

Enough, therefore, and too much of Hafed, or Halfhead, as a witty friend styles him. Various persons of sound critical judgment in England assure me, that, independent of the truthlessness of this book in regard to history and theology, its literary merits are too poor to deserve much serious comment. *Requiescat in pace.*

Yours truly,

WILLIAM HOWITT.

MR. D. D. HOME'S STATEMENTS.

To the Editor of the "Spiritual Magazine."

DEAR DR. SEXTON,—In reply to Mr. Aksakof's questions in your number for June, I can inform him that it was not till after my letter was printed I ascertained the Pettys had not been tied. I was not thinking of Bredif, who is a medium, but who knows how strongly I object to all rope-tying. It is at the same time undignified and unsatisfactory, and not in the very least precluding the possibility of fraud. The most ordinary third-rate conjuror will get free from knots in a most astonishing manner with even ordinary dexterity.

As there is a wide-spread feeling that I denounce the rope-tying system, I may as well explain that I do with heart and soul object to the system; but I do not denounce the medium. I censure more the persons who encourage this

senseless and useless humiliation, which after all is not a test. Even the Davenport Brothers (I take them as an example as being the most prominent in this particular phase), I no more doubt their being mediums than I doubt the sunlight. What I do doubt is the real good accomplished by the means adopted. Other and more simple forms of mediumship, which they and others are endowed with, would, to my way of thinking, be far more convincing, and certainly more consolatory, to the many sorrowing hearts who seek a consolation rather than what at least can be almost as well done by a third-rate conjuror. If I am in error, I stand ready to be convinced; but after an experience of *twenty-five* years, my opinions are deeply rooted.

For the second question. At the time I wrote the letter alluded to, I was reading a book called *People from the Other World*, and there, p. 453, I found the following *most MONSTROUS assertion*: "Instead of being controlled to do their will (the spirits), it is she who seems to control them to do her bidding. Whatever may be the secret by which this power has been obtained, I cannot say, but that she possesses it I have had too many proofs to permit me to doubt the fact." I make appeal to every *reasoning* human being if the very thought of such a thing is not only "*monstrous*," but downright *blasphemy*. Think for a moment that those dear to you can be "controlled" to do the "bidding" of a human being. I am astonished and ashamed of my fellow-Spiritualists that more competent men than I am should have allowed such an assertion to pass unnoticed. I committed a most grave error, and one for which I demand pardon. I ought not either in justice to myself as a gentleman, or to the cause I seek to maintain, to have made allusion to the past life of any one; but as I had just been reading p. 438 of the same book, where in speaking of a woman (true she had not, by a trick of birth, been placed in a position where she could claim kin to persons of title; still *she* is also a woman, and as such should be dealt with more tenderly) he says: "A person paraded before the public in such a character as she assumes, must, of course, expect to be closely criticised, and have enquiry made into her antecedents; for her reputation, for truth, and her moral character, have a most important bearing upon the question whether her tale shall be believed."

I certainly was influenced to consider that such assumptions as to have "control" over the souls of those who had gone before, a fair case where the sentence I have quoted should be called into action. I have all the more reason to regret the course I took, as I have a letter from the author of the book in question, wherein he says, "I called her when writing my book 'one of the most remarkable mediums in the world.' At that very time she denied the possession of mediumship; but thinking I knew better, I assumed to classify her as I did." Still more in the same letter he says, in speaking of the medium alluded to at the age of twenty-five, "She conquered her mediumship, and became an ardent student of Occultism. She has never pretended to control *human* spirits (another blunder of mine in my book, resulting, like the others, from ignorance of the difference between "spirits"), nor admits that anyone else has, can, or will." I feel assured that there will be but one voice in censuring a man who has the audacity to print a book wherein such "assumptions" and egregious "blunders" are made; for he could but expect to give pain to those who in reality were perfectly innocent. The incident has been painful, but in doing my duty I only did wrong wherein I took example of this same author in making allusion to the past of any one, whether man, woman, or child.

The book I am writing has been so very severely criticised before it is printed by those wise people who know better than I do what its contents are, that I have only the consolation left me to know that, as not one of them has been anywhere near the truth, they will have the comfort of attacking and insulting me on some other point when the book is in reality published. The braying of asses is not melodious, but if it is the slightest comfort to the poor animals, why deprive them of this little fancy?

Yours ever faithfully,

May 6th, 1876.

La Malon, Herault, France.

D. D. HOME.